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July
1926

AINSLEE'S

STORIES THAT CHARM AND ALWAYS WILL

Vol. LVII
No. 5

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Here are thumb-nail sketches of some of the latest Chelsea House offerings.



THE CRUISE OF THE "COLLEEN BAWN," by Frank Carruthers. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price \$2.

Frank Carruthers, author of "Terror Island," has turned out another smashing sea story, a real contribution to the literature of adventure on the deep. He tells of the shanghaiing of Sid Livingston, whom certain business interests wanted out of the way, of Livingston's experiences with a scoundrelly crew, of his desperate attempt to escape from his captors; and he tells it all so naturally that you can fairly smell salt water and hear the wind whistling through the rigging. Mr. Carruthers is a master of his art; he knows all about ships and men, and when he takes you cruising through the treacherous Bering Sea, you have had an experience you won't soon forget. I recommend this book for all lovers of the sea.

THE CLEW IN THE GLASS, by W. B. M. Ferguson. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price \$2.

Morney, the hero of Mr. Ferguson's story, walked into trouble the moment he set foot in the gossiping little town of Pinelake. Here he found that a woman he had loved, but who had jilted him, was married to the town's leading citizen. Then of a sudden came tragedy. Within a few moments of each other, the woman and her husband were killed, and suspicion pointed to Morney as the murderer.

Here's a story with not a dull page in it, an ideal companion for a summer vacation, one that will make you forget everything but your vital interest in its outcome.



TOUCHING CLOUD, by Ethel Smith Dorrance and James French Dorrance. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75c.

This is a story that takes you into a little-known part of the great West, where the Ute Indians still hold sway. It describes in colorful manner the adventures of a straight-talking, straight-thinking inspector of Uncle Sam's Indian Service, who saves the simple Touching Cloud, son of the Ute chieftain, from a group of white conspirators. The Dorrances have done wonders in creating live personalities against a fascinating background. A book crammed full of exciting action.



TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD, by Christopher B. Booth. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75c.

Mr. Booth has an uncanny way of presenting his readers with mysteries to solve. He can make you sit up with any of his detective stories until the last page is turned. He does the trick again in this story of the murder of a man who had made enemies everywhere. Several persons might have killed the cruel Vance Cunningham, whom excessive drinking had turned into an intolerable tyrant. Once you have started on the trail of his slayer, I'll wager that you will not put the book down. It's a story to test all the detective abilities you have, one that you will remember and recommend to your friends.

Laugh If You Like—!



—But I Did Learn Music Without a Teacher

I was at a little social gathering. Everyone had been called on to entertain and all had responded with a song or with a selection on some musical instrument. And now it was my turn.

I had always been known as a "sit in the corner." I had never been able to either sing or play. So they all murmured as I smiled confidently and took my place at the piano. Then I played—played as no one else had played that evening. First ballads then classical numbers and popular tunes.

For the first time in my life I was the very center of attraction.

They had listened—dumfounded. For a moment, now that I had finished, they remained silent. Then thunderous applause! Then questions.

"How did you do it?" they chorused. "And you're the one who didn't know a note!" "Why didn't you tell us you were taking lessons privately?" "Who was your teacher?"

For a moment the questions overwhelmed me.

"Teacher? I never had one," I replied. "I learned it myself, at home."

They laughed in disbelief.

"Laugh if you want," I countered. "I did learn music without a teacher."

A few months ago I didn't know one note from another. I loved music. But I couldn't afford a private teacher. And I couldn't bear the thought of monotonous exercises. Anyway, I thought a person had to have talent to become a musician.

"You all know how I've just sat around while the rest of you entertained. Time after time I longed to be able to play."

"Then one night I sat at home alone, reading a magazine. Suddenly my eye caught a startling announcement. It told of a new, easy method of quickly learning music—right in your own home—and without a teacher. It sounded impossible—but it made me wonder. After all, I decided, it doesn't cost a cent to find out." So I signed the coupon, and—well, you know the rest.

The course, I explained to them, was more helpful

than I ever dreamed possible.

It was amazingly simple—even a child could learn to play this quick, easy way. I chose the piano. And from the very beginning I was playing *rent notes, catchy tunes*—just like a regular musician! It was just like a fascinating game!

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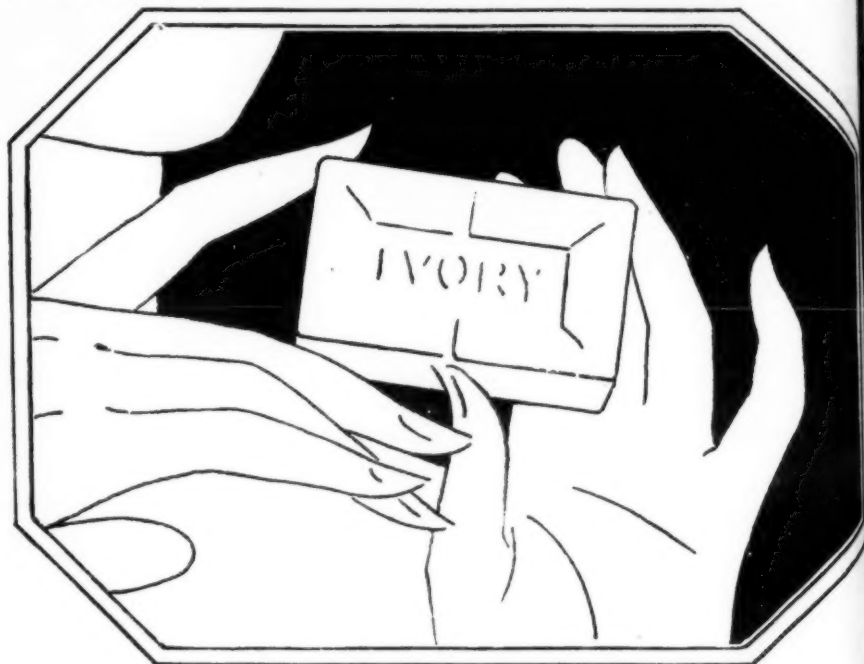
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. LVII.

JULY, 1926.

No. 5

by
M. Nightingale

Author of



"The Pipes of Pan"

The Affair of the Mulhaven Baby

THOSE of you who were in the town in the summer of 19— will remember the extraordinary rumors that were current for the proverbial nine days concerning the alleged abduction of the infant son and heir of Lord Mulhaven. You will remember also how at the end of that time the whole story was violently denied in the papers, and an announcement inserted to the effect that the child had died suddenly of an unsuspected disease, and that the old peer, who had long been in feeble health, was definitely retiring to his country seat in Perthshire. There may be, of course, a certain number who, by one means and another, have come to a more accurate knowledge of

the circumstances surrounding this extraordinary affair, but so far as I know this is the first time that the details have been laid before the public.

At the time the masculine clubs contented themselves with the bald assertion that the child had disappeared, but from the Lyceum Janet had brought a much more ornate account. According to the general conviction of the habitués of these Aristotelian haunts, the Honorable Edward Mulhaven had been accosted by a frock-coated gentleman in De Vere Gardens as he—the Honorable Edward—perambulated homeward after his daily airing in Kensington Gardens. As his nurse not unnaturally combated the suggestion that her charge should ac-

company the frock-coated gentleman, baby, carriage, and nurse were whisked by some marvel of legerdemain into one of Backstone & Company's piano vans, which stood by the curb, since when not the faintest trace of their existence had been discovered.

It was Tubby who recounted to me this amazing story.

"Who on earth would invent such nonsense?" I said.

Tubby chuckled.

"Lots of people—Backstone & Company themselves, for instance. The methods of advertisement are legion. But as a matter of fact this does happen to be nonsense, although in general your comment would be particularly inappropriate. You remember Sherlock Holmes' famous thesis. In every problem, if you eliminate all the impossibilities, that which remains, however improbable, must be the solution. You may quite reasonably substitute 'absurd' for 'improbable.' What I mean to say is that in this work of mine there cannot be a *reductio ad absurdum* in the strict sense of the phrase. In numbers of cases the logical consequence of the train of reasoning has been an apparent absurdity. But it has been none the less correct. Don't scorn the ridiculous, my dear Peter, or you will wander from the very solid highway of real life onto the stage of fiction and make-believe. *Credo quia incredibile* is another facet of the same crystal principle. Truth is so infinitely more wonderful than imagination. That is why, personally, I accept all things, even though I may not myself have tested them. Spiritualism, fairies, Christian Science, saintly vision, palmistry, the miracles of Lourdes, and so on. To me this is the only reasonable attitude. Beauty is truth till you prove her a liar. So is the devil. Can any one demonstrate? Well, then!" He shrugged his shoulders. "But this Lyceum tale chances to be imaginary as well as unreal. This morning——"

Carter threw open the door, interrupting him.

"Lady Mulhaven," he announced, and Tubby rose to confront the admittedly most beautiful woman of the last two London seasons.

"I am honored, Lady Mulhaven," he said simply. "Will you sit by the window here? I am afraid we feel this heat somewhat in Osnaburg Street, and my friend and I have been smoking outrageously also." He wheeled one of the armchairs as he spoke and flung up the sash.

"Thank you."

She slipped off one of her gloves as she sat down, and it seemed to me, as I watched her from the hearthrug where I stood, that there was something of nervousness in the action. She laid it, however, together with a tiny hand bag, upon the window ledge with a little slow, deliberate movement which contradicted my impression. Then she looked up at Tubby with a sudden brilliant smile.

"Are you as wonderful as your reputation?" she asked.

"Every bit," he returned cheerfully. "Since both are not at all. Which does not appear sense, but expresses mine exactly."

"It was extraordinarily lucid, and I understand perfectly," she said.

He sat down on the edge of the table and regarded her thoughtfully.

"You have come to consult me about the alleged disappearance of your little son?" he said.

"The disappearance," she corrected. "That was the one detail in which the various rumors were accurate."

"Will you tell me about it?"

"I would like to say first that, had I my will, you would have been asked to help us some days ago, but Lord Mulhaven was skeptical, and also he was quite assured that so important a personage as the heir to the Mulhaven title and estates could not remain long un-

found. As it is, all Scotland Yard appears to have been unleashed, and the result is—nothing at all. At breakfast this morning I wrung from him a reluctant acquiescence, and came to you myself as soon as I had fulfilled a morning engagement. You know, of course, that my husband's health makes it almost impossible for him to go about."

"I quite appreciate that," Tubby murmured.

"Then I will tell you everything just as it happened. Last Wednesday Parton—Edward's nurse—took him, as she does daily, to Kensington Gardens for his afternoon walk. It appears that she was very tired. She always has Tuesday evenings free for her own amusements, and I gather that last week they had been rather more violently frivolous than usual. At any rate, as Edward was sleeping peacefully, she drew the perambulator alongside one of the seats in the Flower Walk and followed his example. She insists that she did not doze for more than ten minutes, and that when she awoke with a start she rose at once and turned homeward. Baby was still lying quietly asleep, so that she did not pull back his veil to look at him."

"His veil?" Tubby queried.

"Edward has a peculiarly fair and delicate skin, and his eyes, too, are very sensitive to light. On very glaring days nurse arranges a gauze veil across the front of the hood as some slight protection to both. She did not therefore see the baby until she lifted him from his perambulator on her arrival at Cornwall Gardens. Then—so cook tells me—she uttered a piercing scream and rushed into the house. I myself was at home at the time, and she came straight to my boudoir. 'My lady! My lady! He's stolen!' she cried. 'Stolen?' I repeated. 'What do you mean?' I really thought the woman had taken leave of her senses. She held out to me the baby in her arms. It was not Edward, but another child—a stranger."

I could see by Tubby's face that he was keenly interested.

"A substitute?"

"Exactly, Mr. Tubbs. A baby boy of about the same age apparently, but totally different in appearance, and indeed, as we are now learning, in disposition."

"You say totally different, Lady Mulhaven. Will you explain? Forgive me, but to us men I'm afraid all babies seem very much alike."

"I quite agree with you. But in this case there are quite glaring and undeniable points of difference. I spoke of Edward's unusually fair skin. This child is almost swarthy. Edward had a lot of light golden hair. The other is nearly bald, and such hair as he has promises to be dark. Edward's eyes were blue and sleepy looking. This small usurper's are very wide awake and black. Again, my son is of an exceptionally happy, contented nature, but nurse tells me that her new charge cries a great deal and is altogether difficult to manage."

"I see," said Tubby. "Quite an astonishing contrast. May I ask a few questions?"

"But certainly."

"Have you every confidence in your nurse?"

"I trust her absolutely. She was my own maid in Jo'burg."

"Ah, yes. Not a lady-nurse, then. Old or young?"

"Quite young. Twenty-seven or twenty-eight. No, not a lady. Just the ordinary maid class."

"Is she—how do they put it?—walking out with any one?"

Lady Mulhaven's eyebrows lifted slightly.

"Really, Mr. Tubbs, are these intimate researches in the life of one's domestics essential to the question in hand?"

"I think so. But perhaps you yourself are ignorant of such details. I pre-

sume I shall have an opportunity of questioning Parton myself?"

"Undoubtedly. As a matter of fact, however, I do happen to know, as I have encouraged the girl to talk to me of her affairs. She is something of a stranger in a strange land, you see."

"That is kind of you, Lady Mulhaven," said Tubbs gravely.

"She has an understanding, I believe, with a shop assistant in the Fulham Road."

Tubby nodded.

"And what time did she choose for her sleep in Kensington Gardens?"

"Between three and three forty-five. She was home by four o'clock as usual."

"Thank you. I think that is all. The affair seems, perhaps, rather inexplicable at the moment, but I have no doubt whatever that its solution is forthcoming."

"You speak confidently," she said. There was in her voice the least suggestion of something which I could not understand. Tubby also noticed it.

"I feel confident," he said curtly.

"You have formed an opinion?"

"Several. Perhaps you yourself have conceived a possible explanation?"

"Yes, Mr. Tubbs," she returned, a little flash of irritation showing in her tone. "I think the whole thing is the result of my husband's foolishness."

Tubbs waited without comment.

"You must have heard," she continued—"all London hears of his somewhat peculiar temper. In his business life I understand he made countless enemies by his intolerance, and there is many a household cursing him even now for the bad times that followed the bread-winner's summary dismissal. He was so proud of his son and heir that ever since the child's birth a year ago he has made himself and me ridiculous. One would have believed that there never was such a child, and the poor mite has been exhibited and fussed over until it is a marvel that nurse has been able

to keep him sweet-tempered and healthy. This devotion was public property. I feel convinced that some one who suffered in the past at Lord Mulhaven's hands is paying his debt, and that in a little time, after Lord Mulhaven has been sufficiently punished, the child will be returned."

She looked at Tubby with question in her eyes. He shook his head.

"You don't agree?"

"Not a bit."

"Why?" she demanded, obviously nettled.

"For many reasons." He shrugged his shoulders and rose. "Do you really wish me to take up the case, Lady Mulhaven?"

"Of course I do!" It was quite clear that she was astonished and a little disconcerted by the question. "My car is waiting. I hoped that, if you were able, you would return with me."

Suddenly, to my intense astonishment, for I confess I had been revolted by her detached and apparently callous demeanor, she sprang to her feet and clasped Tubby's arm.

"Oh, Mr. Tubbs!" she cried. "Don't you understand? It is *my* baby that is gone—*my* baby! If Lord Mulhaven suffers, surely I suffer a thousand times more! Think what the future would mean to me knowing always that my little one is cheated of a mother's love—perhaps uncared for—perhaps even ill-treated! I lie awake and think of it until I believe I shall go mad."

She threw herself back into her chair and sobbed. Tubby bent down and patted her shoulder.

"Don't!" he said sharply. "I know you lie awake and think. Your face told me that before you spoke. And I shall find your baby. It is not that which troubles me. It is rather the doubt of giving him back to you."

"What do you mean?" she cried, lifting her face, flushed and wet with tears.

"What I say," he answered steadily.

"You say nothing."

Tubby's eyes narrowed.

"I can say no more," he said quietly.

He stared gloomily at the blue sky showing above the line of roofing beyond the window.

"I suppose," he said, without looking at her, "you wouldn't consent to my sister taking on this investigation instead of me? You wouldn't see her?"

She interrupted.

"I don't understand."

"Don't you? My sister is as capable as I of reading the riddle, and she—she is a woman."

There was a note of appeal in his voice, and his face, when it turned, was tense and set like the face of a gambler who hazards much on a single throw.

A look, half puzzled, half wondering, crept into her face.

"I don't know why you wish it," she said slowly, as it were feeling her words one by one. "Nor yet what you are thinking, though something tells me that you are thinking wrong."

"I wish I were," he answered bitterly.

"In any case I hate women." She rose, put on her glove, and moved toward the door. "You will accompany me then, Mr. Tubbs?"

"No, Lady Mulhaven. There are just two points on which I want to assure myself. I will leave my visit till tomorrow afternoon. May I say four o'clock? In twenty-four hours much may happen. It is even possible to change one's mind. And second thoughts are notorious, are they not? And will you be good enough to tell Lord Mulhaven that I will deliver the missing heir into his arms quite safe and sound at the hour I mention?"

Once again she raised her eyebrows.

"And his mother's arms?" she said.

"To you," Tubby returned gravely, "my promise was to find him, not to give him back."

Suddenly the color rushed into her face, and her blue eyes flashed.

"Indeed, Mr. Athelstan Tubbs!" she cried. "Then since pledges seem the fashion, let me add mine to the list. And mark it well! These arms that were the first to hold my baby will hold him to the end. And that, in spite of all your English peerage and every man in Scotland Yard."

She flung back her head with a superb gesture, swept past him, and we heard the frou-frou of her skirts upon the stairs.

"Since the company is once more purely masculine," Tubby said after a pause, "I will recite to you a blasphemy. In every thousand women there is one who can be really intensely annoyed without lapsing into the suggestion of a scratch. Lady Mulhaven is one of the nine hundred and ninety-nine. That last remark of hers was nasty in a feline kind of way. But in the pledge—as she puts it—there is a confidence, Peter, which I find disconcerting. Tell me, my friend, have I by some mischance or other missed a point?"

"As your whole attitude," I said, "from beginning to end of the interview was incomprehensible——"

"You are hardly in a position to judge. No, of course, that's true. Then I must consider the whole thing again and sound it out. First, however, I am going over to Cornwall Gardens."

"After all?" I queried.

"Ah, not to the lords and ladies. This time I go for other and less lofty purposes. It is Parton's night out."

He chuckled at my bewilderment.

"I fancy I may find her movements instructive. They are worth watching, anyhow."

He went into his bedroom and reappeared shortly in a seedy suit of serge and a somewhat shiny bowler.

"Why not come with me, old man?" he said. I sprang up joyfully.

"Really?"

"Yes. Only not like that. Come and get into something less attractive." He

took a shabby lounge coat and trousers of pepper-and-salt tweed from one of his wardrobes and flung them on the bed. "There are soft collars in the drawer there, and a few virulent ties. Any of them will do."

I gave a shout of laughter as I faced myself in the glass.

"Character costume is excellent for the pride," said Tubby. "One retains no delusions as to one's personal appearance after a few games of this kind. Who was it said the coat does not make the gentleman?"

"I don't know. Public opinion, I fancy."

"He is a liar," said Tubbs. "But I say, could you do anything with your mustache? It's painfully correct. Stand still a minute."

He brandished a pair of nail scissors, and almost before I realized his intention had snipped it to that toothbrush stubble beloved alike of the subaltern and a certain type of unshaven navy.

"Excellent!" he said, surveying me critically.

"But, good Lord, man——" I remonstrated.

"That's all right. It's an improvement. You can clean shave to-morrow. Much more convenient, since you seem to be taking to this business of mine. One must sacrifice something in the cause of art. What are you laughing at?"

"You and Janet always remind me of the first chapter in Genesis," I remarked.

He was not at all amused.

"Are we really like that? How utterly beastly! Please forgive me. I really hardly thought."

"That's the joy of it," I said.

He looked at me suspiciously, and then smiled.

"You mean it?"

"Of course I do."

"That's splendid, then. Come on."

As often happens in September, the

heat of a belated summer's day died with the sun, and it was astonishingly cold as we dawdled about Cornwall Gardens, awaiting the release of the good Parton. It was six when we arrived in the immediate vicinity, and at a quarter to seven Tubby turned up his collar with a grunt.

"There's no under-nurse," he said. "I know that; and she puts her charge to bed before she sallies forth. What on earth time do babies go to bed?"

We had found a wall far from a gas lamp, and staving off the east wind which blew with shrewdness and unusual energy. We were leaning up against the bricks and trying to feel good humored. I wondered vaguely how he knew these features of Lady Mulhaven's nursery régime, but felt too depressed by the climatic condition to put the question into words.

A door clicked somewhere, and we heard the clang of a near gate. Tubby lurched to an equilibrium and grabbed my shoulder.

"Here she comes!" he muttered.

Even as he spoke she tripped by within a dozen feet of us, a neat little figure in nurse's bonnet, her cloak fluttering as she went.

"Delayed by something or other," whispered Tubby. "No time to change into unofficial finery, not even to button her cape."

We slouched out brazenly and followed in her wake. Cornwall Gardens was deserted, and our footsteps raised the echoes, but Parton paid no heed. Probably her mind was bent on her own pleasure and the agreeable hours of the immediate future. In a few minutes we were in a well-frequented thoroughfare where there was no likelihood of our pursuit being noticeable.

"Cromwell Road," Tubby said. "Which way is she going? Keep your eye on her, Peter."

Then he relapsed into silence, and when I looked at him a few minutes

later his face had taken upon itself that expression of blank immobility which I knew betokened concentration and a hard-working brain. He was testing his theories as he had foretold he would need to do.

We were some way down the Fulham Road when I touched him on the arm. He came to himself with a start.

"She's gone in there," I said.

He stared across the road in the direction I pointed. Half a dozen shops elbowed each other, and seemed to grumble at their lack of growing space.

"Not the hairdresser's?"

"Yes," I answered.

He chuckled gleefully.

Our quarry's cover, however, was only temporary. She emerged almost immediately, accompanied by a man who beamed upon her with a smile as unctuous as his hair. The latter shone so amazingly in the gaslight—he carried his hat in his hand, and clapped it on only when he had fallen into step beside her—that even my untrained intelligence, noting this feature and the unhealthy, doughlike color of his face, would have voted him a barber's assistant without the added evidence of the shop itself. The two of them came to a standstill at a greengrocer's some doors away, and she pointed to a picture hanging above the fruit and vegetables. He looked up eagerly and nodded, laughing. Then they turned away, their chins in the air and importance in every movement of their retreating forms.

Tubbs watched them critically until they were lost among the other pedestrians of that cosmopolitan thoroughfare. Then he turned and looked at me.

"Peter, old man, could you stand a shave?"

"What—my mustache again?"

"Your chin's too clean," he said apologetically. "So is mine. The toothbrush is a godsend, if you don't really mind."

"Not a bit," I said resignedly.

As we crossed the road Tubby darted from my side. Opposite the greengrocer's he, too, stopped and stared as had stared Parton and her young man. Then he returned to me, and together we entered the little poky saloon.

The proprietor was stropping razors. He did not hurry to attend us, and after a contemplation of our figures in one of the mirrors, I found myself sympathizing with his lack of enthusiasm: We were not promising customers.

"Can you do us a shave, mate?" asked Tubby genially.

"Both of you?"

"No—him." He jerked his head in my direction. "His girl's took an fancy for a smooth face—says it's more gentlemanly, and he's taking her out to-night."

I sat down on one of the stools and was enveloped in a not irreproachable jacket. Tubby sat alongside and lit a cigarette.

"Have one?" he said, offering them.

"Don't mind if I do," said the proprietor. "Tuesday's a slack night. Don't suppose I shall have another customer before I close." He flourished a soapy brush and lathered me.

"Lucky, as your man's out."

"That's so." He spoke gloomily and glanced at the door with regret in his eyes.

"I hear you're losing him altogether,"

Tubbs said after a pause.

"That's so too," the old man growled. "Gave me notice to-day. How d'you know it?"

"There's a pal of mine as knows him," Tubby said easily. "He's been talking of it, I suppose. My pal says to me: 'You have a shot at the job.'"

"That your trade, then?" said the other.

"Not this sort," Tubby returned modestly. "Too classy for me. I couldn't touch it. Whitechapel's more in my line. I'm all right there. Not in the West End, though. Not yet,

anyway, though I may get to it some day."

The old man was obviously flattered.

"I don't mind teaching any one as is handy, and has the right spirit," he said. "What's your wages?"

But Tubby was obdurate.

"No," he said, shaking his head; "I know my limitations. I ain't up to this by a long chalk. What for did that long fool of yours want to give it up? Come into a bit of money, hasn't he?"

"Something of the kind. He's getting married. His girl comes from South Africa, and nothing'll suit her but that they heads back there. Her mistress is standing the passage, I take it, and they're setting up on their own. As you say, there's a bit of money somewhere, for I'll take my oath he's never saved it while he's with me. Some folks never know when they're well off. Slept on the premises, he did. A sitting room to himself, too, where he could have his girl when she could get away. She'd come along of an afternoon sometimes with the pram, and if we wasn't busy I'd give him an hour off, and there they'd be billing and cooing, with the babbie sleeping like a top."

"Uncommon good of you, I call it," Tubby said enviously. "Not many chaps got a boss like that."

"You're right," agreed the old man. "But I always says, if my lads consider me, I do the same by them. He was a good worker, and he got his pay back, over and beyond his week's salary."

"So I should say!" Tubby said solemnly. "She came in last week, didn't she, boss?"

"She did that," the boss asserted. "An all-afternoon sitting. Here at 2.15 she was, and the pram down in the shop, and her and him and the little 'un up in his sitting room till nearly four. Nine customers I had, and me a-calling up the stairs after him time and again, and, 'Coming, sir!' says he likewise down 'em, but never showing himself,

And when he does come the place was empty. 'By-by,' darling, says he. 'Mind he don't catch cold.' And she giggles fit to kill herself. 'Who—me?' I says angrylike, for I was steaming with the heat. 'No, not you, uncle dear,' says she, blowing a kiss. 'He's a naughty boy to leave you. Tell him I said so. But it was really all my fault.' He was that sorry and apologizing I couldn't say much. 'Dock my wages, boss,' he says. 'I deserve it. But there, it's only once in your life as you're in love.' I tell you, my lad, take him all round, he's as good a chap as I've had, and I'm sorry to lose him. Very smart at his work, too. Clip a man quicker than I could myself."

Tubby caught my eye in the glass and rose.

"Improves him, sir, don't it?" he said as the jacket was removed from my weary shoulders.

I planked down a shilling and refused the change.

"I'm flush just now," I said. "You drink our healths, boss." From the jubilation of Tubby's countenance I had gathered that some such offering was not undue payment for benefits received.

"I'm sorry you're losing him," my friend said as we crossed the threshold. "But I can't help feeling he's more than a jay to make a change. Tell you, sir, when I'm more fitted——"

He nodded his head knowingly, and the old man smacked him on the back.

"You come along when you like, my lad," he said generously, as I and this newborn tonsorial aspirant slouched off.

When we were well out of the sight of shop and proprietor alike, Tubby stopped and rubbed his hands.

"Gosh, what luck!" cried he. "What incredible luck! Peter, whenever you see symptoms of my growing top-heavy with a sense of my own astuteness—and they do appear sometimes—just remind me that in five cases out of ten, for some unaccountable reason, the gods

are on my side. That's point one on which I needed information."

"And the other?"

"The other belongs to to-morrow. Shall we taxi? I'm dead tired."

He hailed a passing car whose chauffeur looked askance at such shabby fares, but smiled at a whispered word from Tubby and touched his cap.

As we sank back on the cushions Tubby sighed.

"The other," he repeated, "is George Fortescue and the Berkeley Hotel."

It was not until I was drowsily turning matters over in my mind in that delicious half hour that prefaces a night's repose, that I remembered who George Fortescue was.

Tubbs turned up at Chelsea by lunch time next day in accordance with arrangement. He seemed harassed and depressed.

"No luck," he said, sitting down, unfolding his napkin and nodding to my offer of cold beef. "He was out when I reached the hotel at ten o'clock and has not yet been back. I hung about all morning. He leaves to-night. Some of his trunks are already strapped and down. Hôtel l'Athénée, Paris. Corroboration, and that's all."

He crumbled some bread between his fingers and pondered.

"He was at Oxford with you?" he said at last.

"The first year," I answered. "Sent down, you know."

"I know. What was it all about?"

"No one knew the ins and outs. A series of futile pranks, I believe. There may have been worse underneath, but I doubt it. He was not the type. He never did a stroke of work, of course, though he was brilliantly clever. He enlisted in the Imperial Yeomanry in 1900."

"When he was sent down?"

"Exactly. Went to London and took the shilling on the spot. He was out

almost at once. A splendid horseman and a crack shot."

"Did you hear anything further of him?"

"Yes. He wrote to me at Oxford about a bill he had left. I paid it for him. He was having a 'filthy time'—his own expression."

"Most of 'em did. You know he was recommended for the V. C. in 1902. Reported missing, and then presumed dead."

"No," I said, "I didn't. To tell the truth I forgot his very existence. The name was familiar when you mentioned it last night, but it was hours before I placed it."

"A month or so ago he turned up in England—quite quietly. I saw no comment upon it anywhere. Janet met him at a dance at Lady Belgrave's—his aunt, you know. She sat out one dance with him, and they chattered of everything in general and nothing in particular. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of a sentence. He recovered himself in a moment and finished it quite naturally and sensibly. But Janet had turned to him. His face was ashy, and she followed his eyes. Lady Mulhaven had just entered the room. Later on he asked casually: 'Who's that pretty girl in black over there by the door?' 'Which?' said Janet. 'The tall, fair one with diamonds in her hair.' Janet told him, and he asked a lot of questions about her—how long she'd been married—was she happy?—what was Lord Mulhaven like, and so on."

"But what on earth has all this to do with the abduction of the Honorable Edward?" I asked.

"Unfortunately a very great deal, George Fortescue happens to be the next heir to the peerage," Tubby said grimly.

I stared at him in amazement.

"George Fortescue?" I ejaculated.

"George Fortescue. When that lad bolted from the misery of a thoroughly unsatisfactory career, he was the young-

est of three brothers—children of Lord Mulhaven's youngest brother. His connection with the peerage seemed as remote as the millennium. His father and his bachelor uncle died within six months of each other two years ago. His own eldest brother was killed at Magersfontein, and Philip, his second brother, died last January of heart disease. Were it not for this small and entirely unexpected baby—remember, the old man married at seventy—George the erstwhile ne'er-do-well would be the prospective Lord Mulhaven. Now you see his connection with this entirely beastly affair."

He flung down his napkin and began to pace up and down.

"Listen!" he said. "It will do me good to re-state the whole case to you, as I have put it to myself about ten times already, beginning with—"

"Lady Mulhaven's visit," I said, for his extraordinary attitude during the short interview was still puzzling me.

"By no means," he returned. "But with my own visit to Lord Mulhaven five hours earlier."

"What?" I cried.

"At ten o'clock yesterday morning Lord Mulhaven telephoned for me to see him at Cornwall Gardens. I went obediently, and spent an interesting hour with him. He told me the story just as Lady Mulhaven told it, with one important difference. You will remember she proffered his unwillingness as the reason of the delay. He maintained that he would have called me in last week had it not been for his wife's opposition to the proposal. She hated private detectives, she said. They were detestable and utterly useless. He had declared emphatically at breakfast that morning that, objection or no objection, he would appeal to me, and, being very much an old gentleman of his word, he did so forthwith. When he had finished his account I asked a few questions and requested to see the baby. Lord Mulhaven

was surprised. He saw no point in my doing so—anyway he wouldn't have the brat down there—he had seen it once only since the thing happened—had no wish to see it again—if I chose to go to the nurseries, etc., etc. I did choose, and a rigid footman escorted me upstairs. Here I interviewed the worthy Parton. His majesty the baby was asleep. I lifted him myself from his cot, and was interested to find that, contrary to the universal custom in regard to infants' hair, these locks had been cut. Extraordinarily well cut, I admit—incredibly well. I am convinced that, had I not expected it, I should never have detected the fact. His skin, too, was not *au naturel*, as the menu cards say. No, it wasn't in the least obvious. One found the information in unexpected places—the inside of his tiny ears, between his toes, and in an occasional crinkle. But his eyes, bless you, were as blue as his mother's when he opened them. There was a bottle on the mantelshelf marked 'THE DROPS—NOT TO BE TAKEN.' Every detail was too ridiculously open and simple when you were looking for it."

"But how came you to be looking for it?"

Tubby waved aside the interruption.

"You put me out of my stride," he said. "Let me go my own way, old man." He paused and gathered up his thread. "'He's a fine little fellow,' I said to Parton. 'Some one will be missing him. It's an extraordinary affair.' I did not want her at that period to credit me with suspicions. 'It is indeed, sir,' she said, producing a handkerchief. 'And to think that my carelessness should have been the cause! I feel as if I could drown myself.' She mopped her eyes and sniffed. My good Peter, histrionic talent is infinitely more common among woman than among us. And it wasn't overdone. 'Such a darling as the little changeling is, too, for that matter.' There was a subtle touch about this that astonished me.

She took him from my arms and dandled him while he gurgled cheerfully.

'Ah, well,' I said, 'I hope very soon to find the original, Parton. Was there anything noticeable about the clothes in which this young gentleman made his first appearance?' She fetched a bundle from a neighboring drawer. The garments seemed to me of a weird and wonderful shape, but she assured me they were an infant's normal wear. They were all obviously new. There seemed no point in questioning further. One hates to court lies, and there was no likelihood of her giving me anything else, so I came away. You see, Peter, Parton's story, as delivered by Lord Mulhaven, was not sufficiently plausible. There were too many improbabilities.

One can always swallow a certain amount if there seem sufficient reason for so taxing one's credulity. Personally, I find my digestion will more readily negotiate one large, bold unlikelihood than a number of the little ones. Honestly, I do not believe it would be possible for this amazing conjuring feat to have been accomplished at the place and hour given. The Flower Walk is a favorite resort, and I doubt whether any five minutes of that particular time of day sees it entirely free of passers-by. At any rate it would be only by a remote chance. Secondly, Parton is a particularly careful nurse. Lord Mulhaven assured me of that several times, and of her quite unusual attention to details, and her superiority. That she should have fallen asleep in a public place such as Kensington Gardens, when in charge, or indeed at any time, rather sticks in my throat. A Peckham Rye nursemaid might so wander from the paths of rectitude, but a uniformed nurse in a titled family—— It simply isn't done.

Again, I never yet knew a really attentive nurse who, after a long rest with a sleeping infant, did not peep to see that he were safe and happy before

going upon her way. It is an instinct. They do funny things—these little embryonic forces in the wagging of the world—duck their noses under the clothes and suffocate—swallow their comforters or their own fist. Suppose, for the sake of argument, this woman had fallen asleep, as she says. She admits her own horror at her misdeed. The very first thing she would have done would be to lift that veil which Lady Mulhaven told us of. Well, there are three points; there were others, but these alone would have persuaded me that for some reason or other the tale was not genuine. Then the contrast.

It was too complete. Fair skin—swarthy. Much light hair—little or no dark. Blue eyes—black. Placidity—fretfulness. They would have been safer with so much less. You will notice that often in the really criminal class—they damn themselves by the exaggeration of their own precaution. So I went to the nursery for exactly what I found. The Honorable Edward was not so black as he was painted, in more ways than one. To lay at his door the trouble agitating at that moment the heart of his aristocratic old father was entirely unfair. He had never deserted the paternal roof, and it needs only a good hot bath at four this afternoon to demonstrate the fact indisputably. Had the case entailed only the restoration of the lost baby, the matter would have been simple enough. But when it comes to author and motive we are wading into deeper and muddy water. I asked myself to whose advantage was the removal of this baby, and could suggest no one who derived benefit save the next heir. But, then, why this elaborate scheme of substitution? Surely it would have been simpler to have removed the child altogether. As it is, he is removed in name but not in person. What force, while sacrificing his inheritance, would strive to keep his presence? There seemed to me one only—love, and an

exceedingly strong love. No casual affection would have elaborated such a scheme or run such risks. I am putting all this argument just as it came into my mind. I ran over the possibilities. The father was breaking his heart over the loss—really, not histrionically. The nurse? It was conceivable, indeed it was very likely, that she was a paid accomplice; but this plan in no way insured her retention of the child, since either she or the boy might be ejected from the house at any moment. There remained the mother. Granted that the small heir to the Mulhaven title had to be eliminated, at least she kept her son. Even if Lord Mulhaven were averse to adopting the little usurper, it would only be a question of persuasion. Is that clear and sound?"

"Perfectly."

"Very well, then. Here was I faced with a solution in which the mother and the heir played equally prominent parts, and I could establish no connection between them. I did not even know who the heir was. I ran into Janet's flat on my way home. She's a kind of walking Debrett. Consequently, I have ignored the study lately, on the principle that you can't know everything, and when ready and reliable reference is possible, it is equally effectual to refer. 'George Fortescue, of course,' said she. 'Do you mean to say you don't know that?' Then she elaborated for me all the diseases and deceases of the Mulhaven house, drew a little tree with George at the bottom, and faced me with a serious face. 'Why did George Fortescue want to know all about Lady Mulhaven that night?' said she. 'What night?' said I. Even Janet is annoying at times. Then followed the story of the dance. We sat down and worked the whole scheme out in detail—both in conception and organization. After which, since Janet was due to lecture at a girls' school in Chester yesterday evening, and I to give you lunch at 1.30, we parted; she to

fling garments into a suit case, and I to taxi to Osnaburg Street at great speed and much expense."

"Lecture? Janet?" I said. "On what?"

"Lord knows! Anything," returned he. "My dear boy, I am ever perceiving more and more clearly that all things come to an end save that girl's amazing versatility, which is exceeding broad."

"And her theory of the case?" I asked.

Tubby stared.

"*Our* theory," he said with emphasis, "was this: Fortescue and Lady Mulhaven had met at some time previous to the latter's marriage—where or how, of course we did not know. Lady Mulhaven's mention of Jo'burg yesterday explained matters. It had been during the South African War. He was an old lover of hers, and is reported dead. She comes over here, and since it was no longer possible to marry for love, marries for money and position, as numberless women have done before and will continue to do so long as the world endures. Everything is as happy as is possible, lacking the one thing needful, and a child is born. Fortescue returns, recognizes her, and makes himself known. Their feelings toward each other are same as ever. Now hear the laughter of the gods! Peter, I am immutably convinced that the violation of conscience bears in itself the seed of its own damnation. She has sacrificed love at the altar of rank materialism, and inevitably materialism itself mocks her. Had she remained faithful to her own heart she might have had wealth, love, title, in one beautiful whole, whereas now, by her own act, she has cut off irrevocably the glory that might have been hers. She has borne a child to a man she doesn't love—a man old enough to be her grandfather, and from whom every instinct of her warm youth and idealism must have revolted—and

that very child takes from her true mate the title, wealth, and honor she should have shared. If she claim the love which is assuredly hers, she loses at one blow not these only, but her child also and her good name. Then comes the subtle suggestion of this way of escape. The total disappearance of the Honorable Edward insures the inheritance for George Fortescue, and, engineered according to this plan, her own retention of her son. She knows Lord Mulhaven well enough to be sure that he will not wish to keep this stranger child. She will join her lover, taking the boy with her. In conception the scheme seems elaborate, but in operation it was extraordinarily simple. On that Wednesday afternoon Parton left the Gardens early—if indeed she ever went there—and took the child to our friend the barber's; he corroborated the assumption, you remember. This, of course, was all arranged beforehand. Parton's young man was to be subsidized for his share in the affair. That was inevitable. Lady Mulhaven would pay heavily for silence, probably get them out of the country. It was on the strength of this surmise and the greengrocer's picture that I hazarded the suggestion that he was throwing up his job."

"The picture?" I queried.

"A fruit farm. They walked off with an air of presumptive proprietorship. We never heard the good man's name. Call him James. He looked it. James, then, is a smart lad. He crops the child's hair and mildly stains the little that remains; he and she darken the little fellow's skin with walnut juice or some other concoction, dress and tuck him up again, and the good Parton wheels him home. We have the little scene on the steps for the benefit of cook and all whom it may interest, and the journey to my lady's boudoir to say that all is well and ready for the next scene in the drama."

"But the eyes?" I objected.

"Belladonna—a dangerous game too—but you'll understand the only person it was necessary to deceive was Lord Mulhaven. They did not anticipate that the police would minutely examine the child. Why should they? What possible reason should the police have for imagining that Lord Mulhaven would call in Scotland Yard to investigate an abduction which never took place and restore a child who had never been removed? Scotland Yard is nothing if not simple and straightforward. If she is called in to investigate a burglary, she casts around for a thief. The invariable assumption is that the man who calls in the police actually needs the assistance of the law. It is an excellent principle, but, like every rule, has its exception, as in this case."

"What about the change of temper?" I queried.

Tubby shrugged his shoulders.

"We have that on the authority of interested people—the nurse and the mother. On occasion, a tape too tight or a surreptitious pinch. Most babies will cry to order. It probably only happened once—when it was taken to Lord Mulhaven. He was chirpy enough when I handled him. Well, then, everything went swimmingly until Lord Mulhaven's suggestion as to my unworthy self became too insistent. Lady Mulhaven does me the honor to be afraid of me. Finding she cannot avoid me, she does the best thing she can devise under the circumstances—fetches me herself and assures me of her wish to do so days ago. That, of course, tends to deflect suspicion, should it by some remote mischance turn her way. Unfortunately, unknown to her I had already seen Lord Mulhaven. I had all the facts, had seen Janet, and had evolved my theory of the whole case. It is true that the hairdresser's shop and its surrounding details were still undiscovered, but a confederate of some sort had been entered by Janet and myself among the

dramatis personæ—a confederate, male or female, living somewhere on the route Parton took on the memorable afternoon. We hazarded an admirer—hence my question to Lady Mulhaven on the subject. With that one exception when she entered the room yesterday, the whole sequence in my mind was as complete as I have sketched it out for you. I knew she was lying. I knew why. I was convinced she meant to bolt with Fortescue. Her face confirmed me in my belief. You thought her heartless. I knew she was not so. You were surprised at her little outbreak. I was not. The first few sentences were pure acting. She felt the atmosphere too tame for the bereaved mother. She played up. Then, beyond her control, the real mother, the real woman spoke—not to you and me, but to herself. She rehearsed her own feelings in order to justify herself to herself. And yet—there's the point that troubles me, Peter."

"What?" I said.

"Her personality."

He had come to a standstill some time ago, delivering the latter half of his explanation from the hearthrug. Now he resumed his slow pacing to and fro.

"Her personality?" I echoed.

"See here, Peter. Has this view of the problem quite elucidated to you my attitude yesterday afternoon?"

"Perfectly," I returned.

"Has it entirely explained hers?"

"No," I said at last. "Not quite."

"Nor yet to me," he said. "There's a flaw somewhere in the reasoning; yet every link of it holds good."

"It seems extraordinarily sound."

"There's no other possible explanation," he muttered. "And yet—ah, well, we must get on. I'll go and tidy up a bit if I may. Doubtless Cornwall Gardens at four will settle much uncertainty."

"One thing I fail to see," I remarked.

He paused with his hand on the door-knob.

"Why you wanted George Fortescue this morning."

He looked at me for a minute without speaking.

"He's a decent chap really," he said vaguely. "And this is a futile, rotten thing to do."

At Cornwall Gardens the door was opened by a rigid footman, and we were ushered immediately into Lord Mulhaven's presence. The old man looked ghastly. He made an attempt to rise from his armchair, but smiled apologetically and motioned Tubby to approach.

"I thought I would tell you myself, Mr. Tubbs," he said, "that the matter is finished. I have received information this morning of the—of the death of my dear son. The trouble has been due to a misunderstanding, his death to—an unfortunate accident. I make no doubt that you will quite comprehend both the affair itself and the unspeakable pain it is occasioning me. My wife"—he looked hard at Tubby, and a sudden light sprang into the dull old eyes—"my wife has gone with this little nameless one, left her in place of him that was my son—has gone to my place in Scotland, whither I hope soon to follow her. From what she tells me I feel we are greatly in your debt. You will allow me to thank you for a consideration and a delicacy none too common nowadays."

He held out his hand, which my friend took, and five minutes later we were walking back along the Cromwell Road.

"A splendid lie," Tubby said at last. "A splendid lie whereby before the world he keeps untarnished the honor of his house. It is just that kind of thing that trips the Socialist. Would it create a disturbance, think you, if I walked bareheaded for a while? It would? Well, never mind. I took my hat off long ago. But I don't see clear all the same."

He continued his way regardless of bus or taxi, a black frown on his forehead, and I trudged in sympathetic silence by his side. By the time we reached Osnaburg Street I was no further enlightened, nor, I think, was he. We were both exceedingly tired, however, and very grateful for the excellent tea which Mrs. Carter promptly served. Later Tubbs rang up the Berkeley and assured himself that Fortescue was gone. Then he lit his pipe and brooded over the fire. It must have been close upon nine when he suddenly spoke. A book which lay unopened on his knee shot into the fender as he sprang to his feet.

"Ye gods!" he cried. "I've got it! Lord, what a fool I've been!"

He darted to the bell and we heard it pealing in the lower regions. Then he rushed to the head of the stairs.

"Carter—that you? Round to Morley's garage—quick! Ask for Spinks. Tell him I want the fastest car they've got. Dover. Yes—Dover, you ass! D-O-V-E-R. Good Lord, boy, haven't you yet learned never to be astonished? Dover—to catch the night boat, if possible. Spinks, if he's in, remember. If not, the best man Morley's got. Oh, and say I'll pay fines."

He turned back into the room.

"Now, Peter, my boy, are you coming, or aren't you? It's Dover if we're lucky. Paris to-morrow if we're not. Mistakes are expensive luxuries."

"Of course I'm coming," I said.

"Good man! Look out some necessities and stick them in a suit case. You'll find two or three under my bed. The little one will fit us. No, nothing fancy—just our own unadorned selves this time. A couple of caps for the boat. Don't forget. I expect we'll cross."

It is astounding how quickly, from companionship with a man of much journeying, one achieves the philosophic simplicity of the nomadic soul. Six

months back a mere week-end at Brighton was fraught with nerve-racking preparation. A list of requirements brooded over, emended, checked—bags packed and unpacked—a dozen doubtful articles considered, reconsidered and taken, absolute essentials invariably left or lost. Now one traveled to Scotland—Paris—America probably, if need be—with another man's pajamas, half a dozen collars, a pocket comb and a toothbrush. Socks, shirts, and handkerchiefs were bought en route. In Tubby's case was added a small volume of verse which no persuasion would induce him to omit. He read it invariably after he was in bed, vowing it prompted sweet slumber and was peculiarly good for the soul. I have a vivid recollection of watching him so occupied in a hut, indifferently weatherproof, upon the Riffal Alp whither a pursuit once took us. Enveloped in his rug and lit by our one candle, he lay propped on his elbow on the damp and dirty floor, radiantly happy, mumbling melodious iambs and hurling an occasional genial curse at the guttering and rapidly dwindling stump of tallow.

The car was round within five minutes, and we slipped on our coats and tucked ourselves in with rugs.

The chauffeur leaned round as Carter banged the door upon us.

"Cold, sir!" he said.

"Ah, Spinks? I'm in luck. Now, look here. Hang the limit. An extra pound if you get the boat."

"I doubt it, sir, but I'll try."

"Do your best. That's all I ask."

"I will that."

He slipped in the clutch and we glided away from the curb. He drove with unusual skill, edging in and out among the traffic in a manner which, despite his regulation speed, gained minutes in every street.

Once beyond Bromley, however, he flung discretion to the winds. I shall never forget that drive. It was a night

of inky blackness through which one shot at an incredible pace for, it seemed, innumerable hours. Now and then the straggling lights of village windows pierced the curtain that surrounded us, and twice we slowed up and negotiated a town. The first, I think, was Maidstone. I felt the brakes as we slackened down the hill and the fourfold jar as we crossed the metals of the level crossing at its foot. Bright-lit windows, shops, people slid by at appropriate speed, the Spinks' foot drove down the accelerator and we resumed our break-neck pace. The other was Canterbury. A narrow street along which the car ran decorously plunged us without warning into the very middle of the town, where even at this time there was quite enough traffic to evidence the wisdom of our restrained approach. Then sharp to the right into the country roads again, into utter blackness and air that fought against our reckless onslaught and cut our faces in return. And through it all Tubby sat hunched back against the cushions wrapped in a silence as impenetrable as the night itself.

It was only on the high road outside Dover that he stirred.

"Oh, Peter!" he said. "She's off!"

Spinks slowed up as he spoke.

"No good, sir!" he cried, pointing ahead.

We could see the lights twinkling in the harbor, the long line of the Admiralty Pier, and one little constellation that moved slowly away.

"That's her," he added. "I know the look of her. I did this same game a month ago. The gentleman shook his fist and cursed on this very spot. We started a good fifteen minutes earlier, too, sir."

"Yes," said Tubby. "You've been magnificent. So has the car. The Lord Warden, then. We must put up there and wait till the morning."

It was exactly four o'clock on the following day when we walked into the

Hôtel l'Athénée. Tubby demanded the proprietor himself, and talked to him in voluble and rapid French. Then he came back to me.

"All right, thank the gods! They're in the foyer. I'm going straight to them."

I followed him, and on the threshold of the big, airy room he stood and looked around for those he sought. There were some twenty or thirty people scattered about the apartment, but Lady Mulhaven was a woman not easy to mistake or overlook. She and George Fortescue were seated at a small table by a window at the far end, and the afternoon sun was streaming with extraordinary radiance upon her wonderful hair. I have heard the word "golden" applied many times, but in her case it was genuinely descriptive. The quite unfashionable coils that rounded her small head had all the glint and high lights of yellow metal.

Tubby saw her at the same moment as myself, and without any hesitation moved in her direction, threading his way in and out among tables and people, regardless of the eyes turned upon him or of anything save his fixed purpose.

Lady Mulhaven's back was toward us, so that, strangely enough, it was I who first claimed recognition. George Fortescue was bending forward, listening to something she was saying, and he watched meanwhile our approach with the lazy, half-conscious interest which is the usual tribute to unknown newcomers. Suddenly, however, as we drew near, he sprang to his feet.

"Good Lord, Margery!" he said. "There's old Peter Brown—the one man in all the world I most want to meet."

The words were audible to every one in the room. He came forward to meet us.

"By Jove, Peter, this is splendid! I've owed you four pounds ten for close upon six years. Thank the Lord I can

clear it. I've been on your track ever since I landed six weeks ago, but couldn't find your burrow."

Lady Mulhaven turned. For the fraction of a minute she looked at me, and then her eyes rested on Athelstan Tubbs. Not a feature quivered, but slowly the color drifted from her face until she sat there like some quiet and beautiful statue clothed in the garments of modern life.

"Well, Mr. Tubbs!" she said at last.

I glanced at my companion, and was astounded at the expression of his face. It was as white as her own, set with a determination as inexorable as fate, yet with a light of such extraordinary sweetness in his eyes that I found myself suddenly realizing why I—Peter Brown—the most normal and unsentimental of creatures, had in a few short months conceived for him an affection such as I had never felt for any man before. The explanation was after all quite simple. There was in him something which hitherto I had not met. It showed now in his face, as unmistakable as it was indescribable, as he bent toward the woman he had come to seek.

"I owe you a very deep apology," he said simply. "I am here to offer it."

He stood before her, motionless, humble, waiting, but with his eyes looking straight into hers. For fully half a minute she stared back at him in silence. There was wonder and relief in her expressive face. I do not know which predominated. Then quite suddenly she broke into a ripple of laughter.

"But indeed, how impossible!" she cried. "Rather it is I who owe you thanks. I told Lord Mulhaven so, as soon as I understood."

"I owe you a deep apology," he repeated doggedly. "You did not understand. I think, unpleasant as it is, I must explain."

He looked round. There was no one

in our immediate neighborhood, but apparently he was not satisfied.

"Perhaps the balcony?" he suggested.

Fortescue opened the French window, and the four of us passed through. There were several deck chairs leaning against the house wall. Tubby fetched one, placing it for Lady Mulhaven, while he himself leaned back against the stone balustrade. It was clear that, so far as he was concerned, Fortescue and I had ceased to exist.

Lady Mulhaven's blue eyes looked up to his.

"You seem almost tragic," she said.

There was a little nervous ring in her tone. Something of his tension had communicated itself to her. He seemed not to hear.

"You came to me yesterday afternoon," he said, "to ask my help in discovering the whereabouts of your child. Chance had meted out to me knowledge which gave the lie to all your story. I had my case complete—a theory which then fitted and still fits all the facts. But in the chain of it one point was lacking. It was by virtue of this omission that I condemned you. It is for the omission, not the condemnation, that I ask your pardon. I mean—but for the omission I should still condemn."

He spoke bluntly, almost brutally.

"And what was the omission?" she queried.

"It did not occur to me," he said, "that you were Fortescue's wife."

The color flared in her face as if he had struck her.

"Not his wife?" she said. "You thought—"

"I thought," he continued, not having the least intention of sparing himself an iota of the unpleasantness at which he had hinted—"I thought that you were insuring the title for the lover with whom you meant to run away."

Her brow puckered while she took in the full force of this pregnant sentence.

It was George Fortescue who spoke. "Crimminy!" he cried. "You seem to have painted us a pretty pair of villains. Was it with handcuffs, then, that you came round to the Berkeley yesterday?"

"No," answered Tubby gravely. "I came round to tell you what a black-guard you were." But his eyes were still on Mrs. Fortescue.

Suddenly her own filled with tears.

"Thank you, Mr. Tubbs. I told you I owed you thanks. In any case your advice was wisest, was it not?"

"My advice?"

"You sent me home with twenty-four hours wherein to lay it all before Lord Mulhaven."

Tubby crimsoned.

"I sent you home with time to redeem your character, if that's what you mean," he said bitterly.

"You put it so," she answered quickly. "But even if so, it's true. What would he have thought of me, if he had never known the truth?"

"And as it is?"

"As it is, he knows everything. He was utterly splendid. I never loved him until I said good-by. He kissed me as if he were my father, and thanked me for the many things I'd done for him."

Tubby pondered.

"You just meant to disappear?" he said at last.

"Ah—don't you see? Had he thought the child his son, he would have claimed him, even though he divorced me. To tell him the truth was to brand my boy forever. But this little changeling. What was it to him? I could take with me a baby, nameless, if you will, but not disgraced, and always my very own. He would have hushed up the scandal. I know him. And it was only for a short time. The doctors say he cannot live a year." Her eyes grew suddenly wistful. "If only I could have stayed with him to the end!"

George Fortescue got up.

"It was my fault, you know, Tubbs. I should have cleared, as soon as I found how things were. I meant to do so. And then we came face to face in High Street, Kensington, and there was no more to be said."

"You married in Johannesburg?"

Fortescue nodded.

"Then I was wounded in the head and taken prisoner. An old Boer farmer looked after me. I don't know exactly how it happened. The war was well over by the time I had my full senses. There was a Jo'burg paper I came across with her name in as dead—a cousin it was, of the same name. Anyway I was sick and ill and weary of everything. The old man told me I was reported dead. I stayed so, till the lust for the old country came to me and I ran over—to find practically all my family gone and that my dead wife was not dead, but married to another man. In my own mind I still have a conviction that I cannot kill. The decent thing was to have remained dead."

Mrs. Fortescue laid her hand upon his knee.

"That's nonsense, George," she said, but in her voice there was a quality of sadness which somehow belied her words.

"And the automobile you ordered," she cried, "will have been waiting this half hour."

"Will you two join us?" Fortescue said. "The Bois, and tea at the Café de la Cascade?"

Tubby shook his head.

"Thank you," he answered. "We are heading straight home."

He turned, leaned over the balustrade, and looked into the street.

"Yes, it's there," he said.

Then he straightened himself and held out his hand.

"I am forgiven?"

"You are forgiven," she returned.

I made my adieus and followed him. During the whole of our tedious re-

turn journey he made only one remark which showed that the matter was still in his mind. It was when we were in the train running London-wards.

"There are failures," he said, "which are infinitely more satisfying than success."

On the mantelshelf at Osnaburg Street a telegram awaited us. It was from Janet, handed in at Chester at 9 a. m. the previous day:

Just come to me. Of course she was married to him.

Tubby grinned.

"You will bear witness that I announced the fact fully twelve hours earlier," he said.

And that, so far as we were concerned, was the end of the affair.

It has been Tubby's pleasure always to write it down among the few investigations with which he failed to deal successfully, but to me it has seemed far

otherwise. Rather I see in it, more perhaps than in any other single case, the evidence of that all too uncommon quality to which Lord Mulhaven referred.

Of the other actors in the little drama there remains a little more to tell. Lord Mulhaven, preserving to the end the lie by which he kept unstained that particular page of the family history, died a few months later, according to the papers, at his place in Perthshire. Lady Mulhaven, they added, who had been in poor health since the death of her little son, and much shaken by this second loss, purposed a sea voyage and a visit to her South African friends.

Tubby had grunted when he read it.

"To the aristocracy," he said, "all things are possible."

Later still came the announcement of her second marriage and her return to England with her second husband and their small adopted son.



We'll Go No More A-roving

SO, we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.—Lord Byron.

by
Katherine Mansfield

Author of



Robert Edwards. By A. L. L. L.

*'Bliss'
and
The Garden Party*

The STRANGER

IT seemed to the little crowd on the wharf that she was never going to move again. There she lay, immense, motionless on the gray, crinkled water, a loop of smoke above her, an immense flock of gulls screaming and diving after the galley droppings at the stern. You could just see little couples parading—little flies walking up and down the dish on the gray, crinkled tablecloth. Other flies clustered and swarmed at the edge. Now there was a gleam of white on the lower deck—the cook's apron or the stewardess perhaps. Now a tiny black spider raced up the ladder onto the bridge.

In the front of the crowd a strong-looking, middle-aged man, dressed very well, very snugly in a gray overcoat, gray silk scarf, thick gloves and dark felt hat, marched up and down, twirling his folded umbrella. He seemed to be the leader of the little crowd on the wharf and at the same time to keep them together. He was something between the sheep-dog and the shepherd.

But what a fool—what a fool he had been not to bring any glasses! There wasn't a pair of glasses between the whole lot of them.

"Curious thing, Mr. Scott, that none of us thought of glasses. We might have been able to stir 'em up a bit. We might have managed a little signaling. 'Don't hesitate to land. Natives harmless.' Or: 'A welcome awaits you. All is forgiven.' What? Eh?"

Mr. Hammond's quick, eager glance, so nervous and yet so friendly and confiding, took in everything on the wharf, roped in even those old chaps lounging against the gangways. They knew, every man jack of them, that Mrs. Hammond was on that boat, and he was so tremendously excited it never entered his head not to believe that this marvelous fact meant something to them, too. It warmed his heart toward them. They were, he decided, as decent a crowd of people—Those old chaps over by the gangways, too—fine, solid old chaps. What chests—by Jove! And he squared

his own, plunged his thick-gloved hands into his pockets, rocked from heel to toe.

"Yes, my wife's been in Europe for the last ten months. On a visit to our eldest girl, who was married last year. I brought her up here, as far as Salisbury, myself. So I thought I'd better come and fetch her back. Yes, yes, yes." The shrewd gray eyes narrowed again and searched anxiously, quickly, the motionless liner. Again his overcoat was unbuttoned. Out came the thin, butter-yellow watch again, and for the twentieth—fiftieth—hundredth time he made the calculation.

"Let me see, now. It was two fifteen when the doctor's launch went off. Two fifteen. It is now exactly twenty-eight minutes past four. That is to say, the doctor's been gone two hours and thirteen minutes. Two hours and thirteen minutes! Whee-ooh!" He gave a queer little half-whistle and snapped his watch to again. "But I think we should have been told if there was anything up—don't you, Mr. Gaven?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hammond! I don't think there's anything to—anything to worry about," said Mr. Gaven, knocking out his pipe against the heel of his shoe. "At the same time——"

"Quite so! Quite so!" cried Mr. Hammond. "Dashed annoying!" He paced quickly up and down and came back again to his stand between Mr. and Mrs. Scott and Mr. Gaven. "It's getting quite dark, too," and he waved his folded umbrella as though the dusk at least might have had the decency to keep off for a bit. But the dusk came slowly, spreading like a slow stain over the water. Little Jean Scott dragged at her mother's hand.

"I wan' my tea, mammy!" she wailed.

"I expect you do," said Mr. Hammond. "I expect all these ladies want their tea." And his kind, flushed, almost pitiful glance roped them all in

again. He wondered whether Janey was having a final cup of tea in the saloon out there. He hoped so; he thought not. It would be just like her not to leave the deck. In that case perhaps the deck steward would bring her up a cup. If he'd been there, he'd have got it for her—somehow. And for a moment he was on deck, standing over her, watching her little hand fold round the cup in the way she had, while she drank the only cup of tea to be got on board. But now he was back here, and the Lord only knew when that cursed captain would stop hanging about in the stream. He took another turn up and down, up and down. He walked as far as the cabin stand to make sure his driver hadn't disappeared; back he swerved again to the little flock huddled in the shelter of the banana crates. Little Jean Scott was still wanting her tea. Poor little beggar! He wished he had a bit of chocolate on him.

"Here, Jean!" he said. "Like a lift up?" And easily, gently, he swung the little girl onto a higher barrel. The movement of holding her, steadying her, relieved him wonderfully, lightened his heart.

"Hold on," he said, keeping an arm round her.

"Oh, don't worry about Jean, Mr. Hammond!" said Mrs. Scott.

"That's all right, Mrs. Scott. No trouble. It's a pleasure. Jean's a little pal of mine, aren't you, Jean?"

"Yes, Mr. Hammond," said Jean, and she ran her finger down the dent of his felt hat.

But suddenly she caught him by the ear and gave a loud scream. "Lo-ok, Mr. Hammond! She's moving! Look, she's coming in!"

By Jove! So she was. At last! She was slowly, slowly turning round. A bell sounded far over the water and a great spout of steam gushed into the air. The gulls rose; they fluttered away like bits of white paper. And whether that

deep throbbing was her engines or his heart Mr. Hammond couldn't say. He had to nerve himself to bear it, whatever it was. At that moment old Captain Johnson, the harbor master, came striding down the wharf, a leather portfolio under his arm.

"Jean'll be all right," said Mr. Scott. "I'll hold her." He was just in time. Mr. Hammond had forgotten about Jean. He sprang away to greet old Captain Johnson.

"Well, captain"—the eager, nervous voice rang out again—"you've taken pity on us at last."

"It's no good blaming me, Mr. Hammond," wheezed old Captain Johnson, staring at the liner. "You've got Mrs. Hammond on board, ain't yer?"

"Yes, yes!" said Hammond, and he kept by the harbor master's side. "Mrs. Hammond's there. Hul-lo! We shan't be long now!"

With her telephone ring-ringing, the thrum of her screw filling the air, the big liner bore down on them, cutting sharp through the dark water so that big white shavings curled to either side. Hammond and the harbor master kept in front of the rest. Hammond took off his hat; he raked the decks—they were crammed with passengers; he waved his hat and bawled a loud, strange "Hul-lo!" across the water; and then turned round and burst out laughing and said something—nothing—to old Captain Johnson.

"Seen her?" asked the harbor master.

"No, not yet. Steady—wait a bit!" And suddenly, between two great clumsy idiots—"Get out of the way there!" he signed with his umbrella—he saw a hand raised—a white glove shaking a handkerchief. Another moment, and—thank God, thank God!—there she was. There was Janey. There was Mrs. Hammond, yes, yes, yes—standing by the rail and smiling and nodding and waving her handkerchief.

"Well, that's first class—first class!

Well, well, well!" He positively stamped. Like lightning he drew out his cigar case and offered it to old Captain Johnson. "Have a cigar, captain! They're pretty good. Have a couple! Here"—and he pressed all the cigars in the case on the harbor master—"I've a couple of boxes up at the hotel."

"Thanks, Mr. Hammond!" wheezed old Captain Johnson.

Hammond stuffed the cigar case back. His hands were shaking, but he'd got hold of himself again. He was able to face Janey. There she was, leaning on the rail, talking to some woman and at the same time watching him, ready for him. It struck him, as the gulf of water closed, how small she looked on that huge ship. His heart was wrung with such a spasm that he could have cried out. How little she looked to have come all that long way and back by herself! Just like her, though. Just like Janey. She had the courage of a— And now the crew had come forward and parted the passengers; they had lowered the rails for the gangways.

The voices on shore and the voices on board flew to greet each other.

"All well?"

"All well."

"How's mother?"

"Much better."

"Hullo, Jean!"

"Hillo, Aun' Emily!"

"Had a good voyage?"

"Splendid!"

"Shan't be long now!"

"Not long now."

The engines stopped. Slowly she edged to the wharf-side.

"Make way there—make way—make way!" And the wharf hands brought the heavy gangways along at a sweeping run. Hammond signed to Janey to stay where she was. The old harbor master stepped forward; he followed. As to "ladies first," or any rot like that, it never entered his head.

"After you, captain!" he cried geni-

ally. And, treading on the old man's heels, he strode up the gangway onto the deck in a bee-line to Janey, and Janey was clasped in his arms.

"Well, well, well! Yes, yes! Here we are at last!" he stammered. It was all he could say. And Janey emerged, and her cool little voice—the only voice in the world for him—said:

"Well, darling! Have you been waiting long?"

No; not long. Or, at any rate, it didn't matter. It was over now. But the point was, he had a cab waiting at the end of the wharf. Was she ready to go off? Was her luggage ready? In that case they could cut off sharp with her cabin luggage and let the rest go hang until to-morrow. He bent over her and she looked up with her familiar half-smile. She was just the same. Not a day changed. Just as he'd always known her. She laid her small hand on his sleeve.

"How are the children, John?" she asked.

Hang the children!

"Perfectly well. Never better in their lives."

"Haven't they sent me letters?"

"Yes, yes—of course! I've left them at the hotel for you to digest later on."

"We can't go quite so fast," said she. "I've got people to say good-by to—and then there's the captain." As his face fell she gave his arm a small understanding squeeze. "If the captain comes off the bridge I want you to thank him for having looked after your wife so beautifully." Well, he'd got her. If she wanted another ten minutes—As he gave way she was surrounded. The whole first-class seemed to want to say good-by to Janey.

"Good-by, dear Mrs. Hammond! And next time you're in Sydney I'll expect you."

"Darling Mrs. Hammond! You won't forget to write me, will you?"

"Well, Mrs. Hammond, what this boat would have been without you!"

It was as plain as a pikestaff that she was by far the most popular woman on board. And she took it all—just as usual. Absolutely composed. Just her little self—just Janey all over; standing there with her veil thrown back. Hammond never noticed what his wife had on. It was all the same to him whatever she wore. But to-day he did notice that she wore a black "costume"—didn't they call it?—with white frills, trimmings he supposed they were, at the neck and sleeves. All this while Janey handed him round.

"John, dear!" And then "I want to introduce you to—"

Finally they did escape, and she led the way to her stateroom. To follow Janey down the passage that she knew so well—that was so strange to him; to part the green curtains after her and to step into the cabin that had been hers gave him exquisite happiness. But—confound it—the stewardess was there on the floor, strapping up the rugs.

"That's the last, Mrs. Hammond," said the stewardess, rising and pulling down her cuffs.

He was introduced again, and then Janey and the stewardess disappeared into the passage. He heard whisperings. She was getting the tipping business over, he supposed. He sat down on the striped sofa and took his hat off. There were the rugs she had taken with her; they looked good as new. All her luggage looked fresh, perfect. The labels were written in her beautiful little clear hand—"Mrs. John Hammond!"

"Mrs. John Hammond!" He gave a long sigh of content and leaned back, crossing his arms. The strain was over. He felt he could have sat there for ever sighing his relief—the relief at being rid of that horrible tug, pull, grip on his heart. The danger was over. That was the feeling. They were on dry land again.

But at that moment Janey's head came round the corner.

"Darling—do you mind? I just want to go and say good-by to the doctor."

Hammond started up. "I'll come with you."

"No, no!" she said. "Don't bother. I'd rather not. I'll not be a minute."

And before he could answer she was gone. He had half a mind to run after her; but instead he sat down again.

Would she really not be long? What was the time now? Out came the watch; he stared at nothing. That was rather queer of Janey, wasn't it? Why couldn't she have told the stewardess to say good-by for her? Why did she have to go chasing after the ship's doctor? She could have sent a note from the hotel even if the affair had been urgent. Urgent? Did it—could it mean that she had been ill on the voyage—she was keeping something from him? That was it! He seized his hat. He was going off to find that fellow and to wring the truth out of him at all costs. He thought he'd noticed just something. She was just a touch too calm—too steady. From the very first moment—

The curtains rang. Janey was back. He jumped to his feet.

"Janey, have you been ill on this voyage? You have!"

"Ill?" Her airy little voice mocked him. She stepped over the rugs, and came up close, touched his breast, and looked up at him.

"Darling," she said, "don't frighten me. Of course I haven't! Whatever makes you think I have? Do I look ill?"

But Hammond didn't see her. He only felt that she was looking at him and that there was no need to worry about anything. She was here to look after things. It was all right. Everything was.

The gentle pressure of her hand was

so calming that he put his over hers to hold it there. And she said:

"Stand still. I want to look at you. I haven't seen you yet. You've had your beard beautifully trimmed, and you look—younger, I think, and decidedly thinner! Bachelor life agrees with you."

"Agrees with me!" He groaned for love and caught her close again. And again, as always, he had the feeling he was holding something that never was quite his—his. Something too delicate, too precious, that would fly away once he let go.

"For God's sake let's get off to the hotel so that we can be by ourselves!" And he rang the bell hard for some one to look sharp with the luggage.

Walking down the wharf together she took his arm. He had her on his arm again. And the difference it made to get into the cab after Janey—to throw the red-and-yellow striped blanket round them both—to tell the driver to hurry because neither of them had had any tea. No more going without his tea or pouring out his own. She was back. He turned to her, squeezed her hand, and said gently, teasingly, in the "special" voice he had for her: "Glad to be home again, dearie?" She smiled; she didn't even bother to answer, but gently she drew his hand away as they came to the brighter streets.

"We've got the best room in the hotel," he said. "I wouldn't be put off with another. And I asked the chambermaid to put in a bit of a fire in case you felt chilly. She's a nice, attentive girl. And I thought now we were here we wouldn't bother to go home to-morrow, but spend the day looking round and leave the morning after. Does that suit you? There's no hurry, is there? The children will have you soon enough. I thought a day's sight-seeing might make a nice break in your journey—eh, Janey?"

"Have you taken the tickets for the day after?" she asked.

"I should think I have!" He unbuttoned his overcoat and took out his bulging pocket book. "Here we are! I reserved a first-class carriage to Cooktown. There it is—'Mr. and Mrs. John Hammond.' I thought we might as well do ourselves comfortably, and we don't want other people butting in, do we? But if you'd like to stop here a bit longer——"

"Oh, no!" said Janey quickly. "Not for the world! The day after tomorrow, then. And the children——"

But they had reached the hotel. The manager was standing in the broad, brilliantly lighted porch. He came down to greet them. A porter ran from the hall for their boxes.

"Well, Mr. Arnold, here's Mrs. Hammond at last!"

The manager led them through the hall himself and pressed the elevator bell. Hammond knew there were business pals of his sitting at the little hall tables having a drink before dinner. But he wasn't going to risk interruption; he looked neither to the right nor the left. They could think what they pleased. If they didn't understand, the more fools they—and he stepped out of the lift, unlocked the door of their room, and shepherded Janey in. The door shut. Now, at last, they were alone together. He turned up the light. The curtains were drawn; the fire blazed. He flung his hat on to the huge bed and went toward her.

But—would you believe it!—again they were interrupted. This time it was the porter with the luggage. He made two journeys of it, leaving the door open in between, taking his time, whistling through his teeth in the corridor. Hammond paced up and down the room, tearing off his gloves, tearing off his scarf. Finally he flung his overcoat on to the bedside.

At last the fool was gone. The door

clicked. Now they *were* alone. Said Hammond: "I feel I'll never have you to myself again. These cursed people! Janey"—and he bent his flushed, eager gaze upon her—"let's have dinner up here. If we go down to the restaurant, we'll be interrupted, and then there's the confounded music"—the music he'd praised so highly, applauded so loudly last night!—"we shan't be able to hear each other speak. Let's have something up here in front of the fire. It's too late for tea. I'll order a little supper, shall I? How does that idea strike you?"

"Do, darling!" said Janey. "And while you're away—the children's letters, please——"

"Oh, later on will do!" said Hammond.

"But then we'd get it over," said Janey. "And I'd first have time to read——"

"Oh, I needn't go down!" explained Hammond. "I'll just ring and give the order. You don't want to send me away, do you?"

Janey shook her head and smiled.

"But you're thinking of something else. You're worrying about something," said Hammond. "What is it? Come and sit here—come and sit on my knee before the fire."

"I'll just unpin my hat," said Janey, and she went over to the dressing table. "A-ah!" She gave a little cry.

"What is it?"

"Nothing, darling. I've just found the children's letters. That's all right. They will keep. No hurry now!" She turned to him, clasping them. She tucked them into her frilled blouse. She cried quickly, gayly: "Oh, how typical this dressing table is of you!"

"Why? What's the matter with it?" said Hammond.

"If it were floating in eternity, I should say 'John!'" laughed Janey, staring at the big bottle of hair tonic, the wicker bottle of eau-de-Cologne,

the two hair brushes, and a dozen new collars tied with pink tape. "Is this all your luggage?"

"Hang my luggage!" said Hammond; but all the same he liked being laughed at by Janey. "Let's talk. Let's get down to things. Tell me"—and as Janey perched on his knees he leaned back and drew her into the deep, ugly chair—"tell me you're really glad to be back, Janey."

"Yes, darling, I am glad," she said.

But just as when he embraced her he felt she would fly away, so Hammond never knew—never knew for dead certain that she was as glad as he was. How could he know? Would he ever know? Would he always have this craving—this pang like hunger, somehow, to make Janey so much part of him that there wasn't any of her to escape? He wanted to blot out everybody, everything. He wished now he'd turned off the light. That might have brought her nearer. And now those letters from the children rustled in her blouse. He could have chucked them into the fire.

"Janey," he whispered.

"Yes, dear?" She lay on his breast, but so lightly, so remotely. Their breathing rose and fell together.

"Janey!"

"What is it?"

"Turn to me," he whispered. A slow, deep flush flowed into his forehead. "Kiss me, Janey! You kiss me!"

It seemed to him there was a tiny pause—but long enough for him to suffer torture—before her lips touched his, firmly, lightly—kissing them as she always kissed him, as though the kiss—how could he describe it?—confirmed what they were saying, signed the contract. But that wasn't what he wanted; that wasn't at all what he thirsted for. He felt suddenly, horribly tired.

"If you knew," he said, opening his eyes, "what it's been like—waiting today. I thought the boat never would

come in. There we were, hanging about. What kept you so long?"

She made no answer. She was looking away from him at the fire. The flames hurried—hurried over the coals, flickered, fell.

"Not asleep, are you?" said Hammond, and he jumped her up and down.

"No," she said. And then: "Don't do that, dear. No, I was thinking. As a matter of fact," she said, "one of the passengers died last night—a man. That's what held us up. We brought him in—I mean, he wasn't buried at sea. So, of course, the ship's doctor and the shore doctor——"

"What was it?" asked Hammond uneasily. He hated to hear of death. He hated this to have happened. It was, in some queer way, as though he and Janey had met a funeral on their way to the hotel.

"Oh, it wasn't anything in the least infectious!" said Janey. She was speaking scarcely above her breath. "It was heart." A pause. "Poor fellow!" she said. "Quite young." And she watched the fire flicker and fall. "He died in my arms," said Janey.

The blow was so sudden that Hammond thought he would faint. He couldn't move; he couldn't breathe. He felt all his strength flowing—flowing into the big dark chair, and the big dark chair held him fast, gripped him, forced him to bear it.

"What?" he said dully. "What's that you say?"

"The end was quite peaceful," said the small voice. "He just"—and Hammond saw her lift her gentle hand—"breathed his life away at the end." And her hand fell.

"Who—else was there?" Hammond managed to ask.

"Nobody. I was alone with him."

Ah, my God, what was she saying! What was she doing to him! This would kill him! And all the while she spoke:

"I saw the change coming and I sent the steward for the doctor, but the doctor was too late. He couldn't have done anything, anyway."

"But—why *you*, why *you*?" moaned Hammond.

At that Janey turned quickly, quickly searched his face.

"You don't *mind*, John, do you?" she asked. "You don't—— It's nothing to do with you and me."

Somehow or other he managed to shake some sort of a smile at her. Somehow or other he stammered: "No—go—on, go on! I want you to tell me."

"But, John, darling——"

"Tell me, Janey!"

"There's nothing to tell," she said, wondering. "He was one of the first-class passengers. I saw he was very ill when he came on board. But he seemed to be so much better until yesterday. He had a severe attack in the afternoon—excitement—nervousness, I think, about arriving. And after that he never recovered."

"But why didn't the stewardess——"

"Oh, my dear—the stewardess!" said Janey. "What would he have felt? And besides, he might have wanted to leave a message—to——"

"Didn't he?" muttered Hammond. "Didn't he say anything?"

"No, darling, not a word!" She shook her head softly. "All the time I was with him he was too weak—he was too weak even to move a finger."

Janey was silent. But her words, so light, so soft, so chill, seemed to hover in the air, to rain into his breast like snow.

The fire had gone red. Now it fell in with a sharp sound and the room was colder. Cold crept up his arms. The room was huge, immense, glittering. It filled his whole world. There was the great blind bed, with his coat flung across it like some headless man saying his prayers. There was the luggage, ready to be carried away again, anywhere, tossed into trains, carted onto boats.

"He was too weak. He was too weak to move a finger." And yet he died in Janey's arms. She—who'd never—never once in all these years—never on one single solitary occasion——

No, he mustn't think of it. Madness lay in thinking of it. No, he wouldn't face it. He couldn't stand it. It was too much to bear!

And now Janey touched his tie with her fingers. She pinched the edges of the tie together.

"You're not—sorry I told you, John, darling? It hasn't made you sad? It hasn't spoilt our evening—our being alone together?"

But at that he had to hide his face. He put his face into her bosom and his arms enfolded her.

Spoilt their evening! Spoilt their being alone together! They would never be alone together again.



"THE tying up—the fixing one's self with a wife," said Mr. Folair. "It don't take long, does it?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Lillyvick, coloring. "It does not take long. And what then, sir?"

"Oh, nothing," said the actor. "It don't take a man long to hang himself, either, eh?"—*Charles Dickens.*

By
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Author of



'Round the Red Lamp
and
The Tragedy of Koroško

The
Curse of Eve

ROBERT JOHNSON was an essentially commonplace man, with no feature to distinguish him from a million others. He was pale of face, ordinary in looks, neutral in opinions, thirty years of age, and a married man. By trade he was a gentleman's outfitter in the New North Road, and the competition of business squeezed out of him the little character that was left. In his hope of conciliating customers, he had become cringing and pliable, until working ever in the same routine from day to day, he seemed to have sunk into a soulless machine rather than a man. No great question had ever stirred him. At the end of this snug century, self-contained in his own narrow circle, it seemed impossible that any of the mighty, primitive passions of mankind could ever reach him. Yet birth, and lust, and illness, and death are changeless things, and when one of these harsh facts springs out upon a man at some sudden turn of the path of life, it dashes off for the moment his mask of civilization and gives a glimpse

of the stranger and stronger face below.

Johnson's wife was a quiet little woman, with brown hair and gentle ways. His affection for her was the one positive trait in his character. Together they would lay out the shop window every Monday morning, the spotless shirts in their green cardboard boxes below, the neckties above hung in rows over the brass rails, the cheap studs glistening from the white cards at either side, while in the background were the rows of cloth caps and the bank of boxes in which the more valuable hats were screened from the sunlight. She kept the books and sent out the bills. No one but she knew the joys and sorrows which crept into his small life. She had shared his exultations when the gentleman who was going to India had bought ten dozen shirts and an incredible number of collars, and she had been as stricken as he when, after the goods had gone, the bill was returned from the hotel address with the information that no such person had

lodged there. For five years they had worked, building up the business, thrown together all the more closely because their marriage had been a childless one. Now, however, there were signs that a change was at hand, and that speedily. She was unable to come downstairs, and her mother, Mrs. Peyton, came over from Camberwell to nurse her and to welcome her grandchild.

Little qualms of anxiety came over Johnson as his wife's time approached. However, after all, it was a natural process. Other men's wives went through it unharmed, and why should not his? He was himself one of a family of fourteen, and yet his mother was alive and hearty. It was quite the exception for anything to go wrong. And yet in spite of his reasonings the remembrance of his wife's condition was always like a somber background to all his other thoughts.

Doctor Miles of Bridport Place, the best man in the neighborhood, was retained five months in advance, and, as time stole on, many little packages of absurdly small white garments with frill work and ribbons began to arrive among the big consignments of male necessities. And then one evening, as Johnson was ticketing the scarfs in the shop, he heard a bustle upstairs, and Mrs. Peyton came running down to say that Lucy was bad and that she thought the doctor ought to be there without delay.

It was not Robert Johnson's nature to hurry. He was prim and staid and liked to do things in an orderly fashion. It was a quarter of a mile from the corner of the New North Road where his shop stood to the doctor's house in Bridport Place. There were no cabs in sight so he set off upon foot, leaving the lad to mind the shop. At Bridport Place he was told that the doctor had just gone to Harman Street to attend a man in a fit. Johnson started

off for Harman Street, losing a little of his primness as he became more anxious. Two full cabs but no empty ones passed him on the way. At Harman Street he learned that the doctor had gone on to a case of measles; fortunately he had left the address—69 Dunstan Road, at the other side of the Regent's Canal. Robert's primness had vanished now as he thought of the women waiting at home, and he began to run as hard as he could down the Kingsland Road. Some way along he sprang into a cab which stood by the curb and drove to Dunstan Road. The doctor had just left, and Robert Johnson felt inclined to sit down upon the steps in despair.

Fortunately he had not sent the cab away, and he was soon back at Bridport Place. Doctor Miles had not returned yet, but they were expecting him every instant. Johnson waited, drumming his fingers on his knees, in a high, dim-lit room, the air of which was charged with a faint, sickly smell of ether. The furniture was massive, and the books in the shelves were somber, and a squat, black clock ticked mournfully on the mantelpiece. It told him that it was half-past seven, and that he had been gone an hour and a quarter. Whatever would the women think of him! Every time that a distant door slammed he sprang from his chair in a quiver of eagerness. His ears strained to catch the deep notes of the doctor's voice. And then, suddenly, with a gush of joy he heard a quick step outside, and the sharp click of the key in the lock. In an instant he was out in the hall, before the doctor's foot was over the threshold.

"If you please, doctor, I've come for you," he cried; "the wife was taken bad at six o'clock."

He hardly knew what he expected the doctor to do. Something very energetic, certainly—to seize some drugs, perhaps, and rush excitedly with him

through the gaslit streets. Instead of that Doctor Miles threw his umbrella into the rack, jerked off his hat with a somewhat peevish gesture, and pushed Johnson back into the room.

"Let's see! You *did* engage me, didn't you?" he asked in no very cordial voice.

"Oh, yes, doctor, last November. Johnson the outfitter, you know, in the New North Road."

"Yes, yes. It's a bit overdue," said the doctor, glancing at a list of names in a note book with a very shiny cover. "Well, how is she?"

"I don't——"

"Ah, of course, it's your first. You'll know more about it next time."

"Mrs. Peyton said it was time you were there, sir."

"My dear sir, there can be no very pressing hurry in a first case. We shall have an all-night affair, I fancy. You can't get an engine to go without coals, Mr. Johnson, and I have had nothing but a light lunch."

"We could have something cooked for you—something hot and a cup of tea."

"Thank you, but I fancy my dinner is actually on the table. I can do no good in the earlier stages. Go home and say that you have seen me and that I am coming, and I will be round immediately afterwards."

A sort of horror filled Robert Johnson as he gazed at this man who could think about his dinner at such a moment. He had not imagination enough to realize that the experience which seemed so appallingly important to him, was the merest everyday matter of business to the medical man who could not have lived for a year had he not, amid the rush of work, remembered what was due to his own health. To Johnson he seemed little better than a monster. His thoughts were bitter as he sped back to his shop.

"You've taken your time," said his

mother-in-law reproachfully, looking down the stairs as he entered.

"I couldn't help it!" he gasped. "Is it over?"

"Over! She's got to be worse, poor dear, before she can be better. Where's Doctor Miles?"

"He's coming after he's had dinner."

The old woman was about to make some reply, when, from the half-opened door behind, a high, whinnying voice cried out for her. She ran back and closed the door, while Johnson, sick at heart, turned into the shop. There he sent the lad home and busied himself frantically in putting up shutters and turning out boxes. When all was closed and finished he seated himself in the parlor behind the shop. But he could not sit still. He rose incessantly to walk a few paces and then fell back into a chair once more. Suddenly the clatter of china fell upon his ear, and he saw the maid pass the door with a cup on a tray and a smoking teapot.

"Who is that for, Jane?" he asked.

"For the mistress, Mr. Johnson. She says she would fancy it."

There was immeasurable consolation to him in that homely cup of tea. It wasn't so very bad after all if his wife could think of such things. So light-hearted was he that he asked for a cup also. He had just finished it when the doctor arrived, with a small black leather bag in his hand.

"Well, how is she?" he asked genially.

"Oh, she's very much better," said Johnson, with enthusiasm.

"Dear me, that's bad!" said the doctor. "Perhaps it will do if I look in on my morning round?"

"No, no," cried Johnson, clutching at his thick frieze overcoat. "We are so glad that you have come. And, doctor, please come down soon and let me know what you think about it."

The doctor passed upstairs, his firm, heavy steps resounding through the

house. Johnson could hear his boots creaking as he walked about the floor above him, and the sound was a consolation to him. It was crisp and decided, the tread of a man who had plenty of self-confidence. Presently, still straining his ears to catch what was going on, he heard the scraping of a chair as it was drawn along the floor, and a moment later he heard the door fly open and some one come rushing downstairs. Johnson sprang up with his hair bristling, thinking that some dreadful thing had occurred, but it was only his mother-in-law, incoherent with excitement and searching for scissors and some tape. She vanished again and Jane passed up the stairs with a pile of newly aired linen. Then, after an interval of silence, Johnson heard the heavy, creaking tread and the doctor came down into the parlor.

"That's better," said he, pausing with his hand upon the door. "You look pale, Mr. Johnson."

"Oh, no, sir, not at all," he answered deprecatingly, mopping his brow with his handkerchief.

"There is no immediate cause for alarm," said Doctor Miles. "The case is not all that we could wish it. Still we will hope for the best."

"Is there danger, sir?" gasped Johnson.

"Well, there is always danger, of course. It is not altogether a favorable case, but still it might be much worse. I have given her a draught. I saw as I passed that they have been doing a little building opposite to you. It's an improving quarter. The rents go higher and higher. You have a lease of your own little place, eh?"

"Yes, sir, yes!" cried Johnson, whose ears were straining for every sound from above, and who felt none the less that it was very soothing that the doctor should be able to chat so easily at such a time. "That's to say, no, sir, I am a yearly tenant."

"Ah, I should get a lease if I were you. There's Marshall, the watchmaker, down the street. I attended his wife twice and saw him through the typhoid when they took up the drains in Prince Street. I assure you his landlord sprung his rent nearly forty a year and he had to pay or clear out."

"Did his wife get through it, doctor?"

"Oh, yes, she did very well. Hulloo! Hulloo!"

He slanted his ear to the ceiling with a questioning face, and then darted swiftly from the room.

It was March and the evenings were chill, so Jane had lit the fire, but the wind drove the smoke downwards and the air was full of its acrid taint. Johnson felt chilled to the bone, though rather by his apprehensions than by the weather. He crouched over the fire with his thin, white hands held out to the blaze. At ten o'clock Jane brought in the joint of cold meat and laid his place for supper, but he could not bring himself to touch it. He drank a glass of the beer, however, and felt the better for it. The tension of his nerves seemed to have reacted upon his hearing, and he was able to follow the most trivial things in the room above. Once, when the beer was still heartening him, he nerved himself to creep on tiptoe up the stair and to listen to what was going on. The bedroom door was half an inch open, and through the slit he could catch a glimpse of the clean-shaven face of the doctor, looking wearier and more anxious than before. Then he rushed downstairs like a lunatic, and running to the door he tried to distract his thoughts by watching what was going on in the street. The shops were all shut, and some rollicking boon companions came shouting along from the public house. He stayed at the door until the stragglers had thinned down, and then came back to his seat by the fire. In his dim brain

he was asking himself questions which had never intruded themselves before. Where was the justice of it? What had his sweet, innocent little wife done that she should be used so? Why was nature so cruel? He was frightened at his own thoughts, and yet wondered that they had never occurred to him before.

As the early morning drew in, Johnson, sick at heart and shivering in every limb, sat with his great coat huddled round him, staring at the gray ashes and waiting hopelessly for some relief. His face was white and clammy, and his nerves had been numbed into a half-conscious state by the long monotony of misery. But suddenly all his feelings leaped into keen life again as he heard the bedroom door open and the doctor's steps upon the stair. Robert Johnson was precise and unemotional in everyday life, but he almost shrieked now as he rushed forward to know if it were over.

One glance at the stern, drawn face which met him showed that it was no pleasant news which had sent the doctor downstairs. His appearance had altered as much as Johnson's during the last few hours. His hair was on end, his face flushed, his forehead dotted with beads of perspiration. There was a peculiar fierceness in his eye, and about the lines of his mouth, a fighting look as befitted a man who for hours on end had been striving with the hungriest of foes for the most precious of prizes. But there was a sadness, too, as though his grim opponent had been overmastering him. He sat down and leaned his head upon his hand like a man who is fagged out.

"I thought it my duty to see you, Mr. Johnson, and to tell you that it is a very nasty case. Your wife's heart is not strong, and she has some symptoms which I do not like. What I wanted to say is that if you would like to have a second opinion I shall be

very glad to meet any one whom you might suggest."

Johnson was so dazed by his want of sleep and the evil news that he could hardly grasp the doctor's meaning. The other, seeing him hesitate, thought that he was considering the expense.

"Smith or Hawley would come for two guineas," said he. "But I think Pritchard of the City Road is the best man."

"Oh, yes, bring the best man," cried Johnson.

"Pritchard would want three guineas. He is a senior man, you see."

"I'd give him all I have if he would pull her through. Shall I run for him?"

"Yes. Go to my house first and ask for the green baize bag. The assistant will give it to you. Tell him I want the A. C. E. mixture. Her heart is too weak for chloroform. Then go for Pritchard and bring him back with you."

It was heavenly for Johnson to have something to do and to feel that he was of some use to his wife. He ran swiftly to Bridport Place, his footfalls clattering through the silent streets and the big, dark policemen turning their yellow funnels of light on him as he passed. Two tugs at the night bell brought down a sleepy, half-clad assistant, who handed him a stoppered glass bottle and a cloth bag which contained something which clinked when you moved it. Johnson thrust the bottle into his pocket, seized the green bag, and pressing his hat firmly down ran as hard as he could set foot to ground until he was in the City Road and saw the name of Pritchard engraved in white upon a red ground. He bounded in triumph up the three steps which led to the door, and as he did so there was a crash behind him. His precious bottle was in fragments upon the pavement.

For a moment he felt as if it were his wife's body that was lying there. But the run had freshened his wits and

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he saw that the mischief might be repaired. He pulled vigorously at the night bell.

"Well, what's the matter?" asked a gruff voice at his elbow. He started back and looked up at the windows, but there was no sign of life. He was approaching the bell again with the intention of pulling it, when a perfect roar burst from the wall.

"I can't stand shivering here all night," cried the voice. "Say who you are and what you want or I shut the tube."

Then for the first time Johnson saw that the end of a speaking tube hung out of the wall just above the bell. He shouted up it:

"I want you to come with me to meet Doctor Miles at a confinement at once."

"How far?" shrieked the irascible voice.

"The New North Road, Hoxton."

"My consultation fee is three guineas, payable at the time."

"All right," shouted Johnson. "You are to bring a bottle of A. C. E. mixture with you."

"All right! Wait a bit!"

Five minutes later an elderly, hard-faced man, with grizzled hair, flung open the door. As he emerged a voice from somewhere in the shadows cried:

"Mind you take your cravat, John," and he impatiently growled something over his shoulder in reply.

The consultant was a man who had been hardened by a life of ceaseless labor, and who had been driven, as so many others have been, by the needs of his own increasing family to set the commercial before the philanthropic side of his profession. Yet beneath his rough crust he was a man with a kindly heart.

"We don't want to break a record," said he, pulling up and panting after attempting to keep up with Johnson for five minutes. "I would go quicker if I could, my dear sir, and I quite sym-

pathize with your anxiety, but really I can't manage it."

So Johnson, on fire with impatience, had to slow down until they reached the New North Road, when he ran ahead and had the door open for the doctor when he came. He heard the two meet outside the bedroom, and caught scraps of their conversation. "Sorry to knock you up—nasty case—decent people." Then it sank into a mumble and the door closed behind them.

Johnson sat up in his chair now, listening keenly, for he knew that a crisis must be at hand. He heard the two doctors moving about, and was able to distinguish the step of Pritchard, which had a drag in it, from the clean, crisp sound of the other's footfall. There was silence for a few minutes and then a curious, drunken, mumbling, sing-song voice came quivering up, very unlike anything which he had heard hitherto. At the same time a sweetish, insidious scent, imperceptible perhaps to any nerves less strained than his, crept down the stairs and penetrated into the room. The voice dwindled into a mere drone and finally sank away into silence, and Johnson gave a long sigh of relief, for he knew that the drug had done its work and that, come what might, there should be no more pain for the sufferer.

But soon the silence became even more trying to him than the cries had been. He had no clew now as to what was going on, and his mind swarmed with horrible possibilities. He rose and went to the bottom of the stairs again. He heard the clink of metal against metal, and the subdued murmur of the doctors' voices. Then he heard Mrs. Peyton say something, in a tone as of fear or expostulation, and again the doctors murmured together. For twenty minutes he stood there leaning against the wall, listening to the occasional rumbles of talk without being

able to catch a word of it. And then of a sudden there rose out of the silence the strangest little piping cry, and Mrs. Peyton screamed out in her delight and the man ran into the parlor and flung himself down upon the horsehair sofa, drumming his heels on it in his ecstasy.

But often the great cat Fate lets us go only to clutch us again in a fiercer grip. As minute after minute passed and still no sound came from above save those thin, glutinous cries, Johnson cooled from his frenzy of joy, and lay breathless with his ears straining. They were moving slowly about. They were talking in subdued tones. Still minute after minute passed, and no word from the voice for which he listened. His nerves were dulled by his night of trouble, and he waited in limp wretchedness upon his sofa. There he still sat when the doctors came down to him—a bedraggled, miserable figure with his face grimy and his hair unkempt from his long vigil. He rose as they entered, bracing himself against the mantelpiece.

"Is she dead?" he asked.

"Doing well," answered the doctor.

And at the words that little conventional spirit which had never known until that night the capacity for fierce agony which lay within it, learned for the second time that there were springs of joy also which it had never tapped before. His impulse was to fall upon his knees, but he was shy before the doctors.

"Can I go up?"

"In a few minutes."

"I'm sure, doctor, I'm very—I'm very——" He grew inarticulate. "Here are your three guineas, Doctor Pritchard. I wish they were three hundred."

"So do I," said the senior man, and they laughed as they shook hands.

Johnson opened the shop door for them and heard their talk as they stood for an instant outside.

"Looked nasty at one time."

"Very glad to have your help."

"Delighted, I'm sure. Won't you step round and have a cup of coffee?"

"No, thanks. I'm expecting another case."

The firm step and the dragging one passed away to the right and the left. Johnson turned from the door still with that turmoil of joy in his heart. He seemed to be making a new start in life. He felt that he was a stronger and a deeper man. Perhaps all this suffering had an object, then. It might prove to be a blessing both to his wife and to him. The very thought was one which he would have been incapable of conceiving twelve hours before. He was full of new emotions. If there had been a harrowing, there had been a planting, too.

"Can I come up?" he cried, and then, without waiting for an answer, he took the steps three at a time.

Mrs. Peyton was standing by a soapy bath with a bundle in her hands. From under the curve of a brown shawl there looked out at him the strangest little red face with crumpled features, moist loose lips, and eyelids which quivered like a rabbit's nostrils. The weak neck had let the head topple over, and it rested upon the shoulder.

"Kiss it, Robert!" cried the grandmother. "Kiss your son!"

But he felt a resentment to the little, red, blinking creature. He could not forgive it yet for that long night of misery. He caught sight of a white face in the bed and he ran toward it with such love and pity as his speech could find no words for.

"Thank God it is over! Lucy, dear, it was dreadful!"

"But I'm so happy now. I never was so happy in my life."

Her eyes were fixed upon the brown bundle.

"You mustn't talk," said Mrs. Peyton.

"But don't leave me," whispered his wife.

So he sat in silence with his hand in hers. The lamp was burning dim and the first cold light of dawn was breaking through the window. The night had been long and dark but the day

was the sweeter and the purer in consequence. London was waking up. The roar began to rise from the street. Lives had come and lives had gone, but the great machine was still working out its dim and tragical destiny.



Certain Fragments From the Arabic

I.

YOU who are wise to-day,
What of your knowledge when Life's little play
Is ended, and the curtain rustles down—
What of your wisdom then, your great renown?

Make me not wise, like you;
I envy neither sage nor prophet Jew.
Beggared, each journeyed here, and sought for fame,
And lo! went forth as poor as when he came!

II.

I did not know the nightingale could fling
Into one song the whole wild soul of spring;
I did not know—until I heard him sing.

I did not know that Love held all of bliss—
Yea, all that ever was, and all that is;
I did not know—until I felt your kiss!

III.

Oh, in that hour when both of us are dead,
When all of Life and Love at last is said,
Will some rose bloom o'er our graves to tell how our hearts bled?

Or will a lily, in the starlit night,
Lift its pale wonder and its waxen light
To tell the world how our poor hearts loved with a love most white?

Charles Hanson Towne.

by
Henri Murger

Author of



*Scènes de la
Vie de Bohème*

LENTEN LOVES

ONE evening in Lent Rodolphe went home early intending to work. But scarcely had he sat down and dipped his pen in the ink when he was disturbed by an unusual sound. Applying his ear to the indiscreet partition wall, he could hear and distinguish perfectly well an onomatopoeic dialogue carried on principally in kisses in the next room.

"Confound it!" thought Rodolphe as he glanced at the clock. "It is early yet, and my fair neighbor is a Juliet who seldom permits her Romeo to depart with the lark. It is impossible to work to-night." So taking up his hat he sallied forth.

As he stepped into the porter's lodge to hang up his key, he found the portress half imprisoned by the arm of a gallant. The poor woman was so overcome that it was fully five minutes before she could pull the door string.

"It is a fact," mused Rodolphe, "there

are moments when portresses become mere women."

He opened the street door, and lo! in the corner, a fireman and a cook maid were exchanging a preliminary token of affection, standing there holding each other by the hand.

"Egad!" cried he, as he thought of the warrior and his stalwart companion, "Here be heretics, who scarcely so much as know that Lent has begun." And he made for the lodging of a friend in the neighborhood.

"If Marcel is at home, we will spend the evening in abusing Colline," said he to himself. "One must do something, after all."

After a vigorous rapping, the door at length stood ajar, and a young man put his head out.

"I cannot ask you to come in," said this person.

"Why not?" demanded Rodolphe.

"There!" said Marcel, as a feminine

head appeared from behind a curtain. "That is my answer."

"And not a handsome one," was Rodolphe's retort after the door had been shut in his face. "So," said he to himself when he turned into the street, "what next? Suppose I go to Colline's? We could put in the time abusing Marcel."

But as Rodolphe traversed the Rue de l'Ouest, a dark street and little frequented at any time, he perceived a shadowy figure prowling about in a melancholy manner, muttering rhymes between its teeth.

"Hey day!" said Rodolphe. "Who is this sonnet, dancing attendance here? Why, Colline!"

"Why, Rodolphe! Where are you going?"

"To your rooms."

"You will not find me there."

"What are you doing here?"

"Waiting."

"And for what?"

"Ha!" cried Colline, breaking into mock-heroics. "For what does one wait, when one is twenty years old, and there are stars in heaven and songs in the air?"

"Speak in prose."

"I am waiting for a lady."

"Good night," returned Rodolphe, and he made off, talking to himself. "Bless me! Is it St. Cupid's Day, and can I scarcely take a step without jostling a pair of lovers? This is scandalous and immoral! What can the police be doing?"

As the Luxembourg Gardens were still open, Rodolphe took the short cut across them. All along the quieter alleys he saw mysterious couples with their arms about each other flit before him, as if scared away by the sound of his footsteps, to seek, in the language of the poet, the double sweetness of silence and shade.

"It is an evening out of a novel," said Rodolphe; but the languorous

charm grew upon him in spite of himself, and sitting down on a bench, he looked sentimentally up at the moon.

After a time he felt as if some feverish dream had taken possession of him. It seemed to him that the marble population of gods and heroes were coming down from their pedestals to pay their court to their neighbors, the goddesses and heroines of the gardens; indeed, he distinctly heard the big Hercules singing a madrigal to Velleda, and thought that the Druidess' tunic looked unusually short. From his seat on the bench he watched the swan in the fountain glide across toward a nymph on the bank.

"Good!" thought Rodolphe, prepared to believe in the whole heathen mythology. "There goes Jupiter to a tryst with Leda! If only the police do not interfere!"

Resting his forehead on his hands, he deliberately pushed further into the briar-rose wood of sentimentality. But at the finest point in his dream Rodolphe was suddenly awakened by a tap on the shoulder from a policeman.

"Time to go out, sir," said the man.

"A good thing, too," thought Rodolphe. "If I had stayed here for another five minutes I should have had more *vergiss-mein-nicht* in my heart than ever grew on the banks of the Rhine, or even in Alphonse Karr's novels." And he made all haste out of the Luxembourg Gardens, humming in his deep bass voice a sentimental tune which he regarded as the lover's "Marseillaise."

Half an hour after, in some unexplained way, he found himself at the "Prado," sitting at a table with a glass of punch before him, and chatting with a tall young fellow, famous for his nose—a feature which possessed the singular quality of looking aquiline in profile and like a snub nose when seen full face; a nose of noses—not without sense, with a sufficient experience of

love affairs to be able to give sound counsel in such cases and to do a friend a good turn.

"So you are in love?" Alexandre Schaunard—the owner of the nose—was saying.

"Yes, my dear boy. It came on quite suddenly just now, like a bad toothache in your heart."

"Pass the tobacco," said Alexandre.

"Imagine it!" continued Rodolphe. "I have met nothing but lovers for the past two hours—men and women by twos and twos. I took it into my head to go into the Luxembourg, and there I saw all sorts of phantasmagoria, which stirred my heart in an extraordinary way, and set me composing elegies. I bleat and I coo—I am being metamorphosed; I am half lamb, half pigeon. Just look at me; I must be covered with wool and feathers!"

"What can you have been drinking?" Alexandre put in impatiently. "You are hoaxing me, that is what it is."

"I am quite cool and composed, I assure you," said Rodolphe. "That is, I am not; but I am going to inform you that I long for a mate. Man should not live alone, you see, Alexandre; in a word, you must help me to find a wife. We will take a turn round the dancing saloon, and you must go to the first girl that I point out to you, and tell her that I am in love with her."

"Why don't you go and tell her so yourself?" returned Alexandre in his splendid nasal bass.

"Eh, my dear boy! I assure you I have quite forgotten how these things are done. Friends have always written the opening chapters of all my love stories for me; sometimes they have even done the conclusions too. But I never could begin myself!"

"If you know how to end, it will do," said Alexandre; "but I know what you mean. I have seen a girl with a taste for the oboe; you might perhaps suit her."

"Oh," answered Rodolphe, "I should like her to wear white gloves, and she should have blue eyes."

"Oh, confound it! Blue eyes? I don't say no; but gloves! You cannot have everything at once, you know. Still, let us go to the aristocratic quarters."

"There!" said Rodolphe, as they entered the room frequented by the more fashionable portion of the assemblage. "There is some one who seems a very pleasant girl." He pointed out a rather fashionably dressed damsel in a corner.

"Good!" returned Alexandre. "Keep a little bit in the background; I will go hurl the firebrand of passion for you. When the time comes I will call you."

Alexandre talked with the girl for about ten minutes. Every now and again she burst into a merry peal of laughter, and ended by flinging Rodolphe a glance which meant plainly enough, "Come, your advocate has gained your cause."

"Go, the victory is ours!" said Alexandre. "The little creature is not hard-hearted, there is no doubt about it; but you had better look harmless and simple to begin with."

"I stand in no need of that recommendation."

"Then pass me a little tobacco," said Alexandre, "and go and sit over there with her."

"Oh, dear, how funny your friend is!" began the damsel, when Rodolphe seated himself beside her. "He talks like a hunting horn."

"That is because he is a musician," answered Rodolphe.

Two hours later Rodolphe and his fair companion stopped before a house in the Rue Saint Denis.

"I live here," she said.

"Well, dear Louise, when shall I see you again, and where?"

"At your own house, to-morrow evening at eight o'clock."

"Really?"

"Here is my promise," said Louise, offering two fresh young cheeks, the ripe fruit of youth and health, of which Rodolphe took his fill at leisure. Then he went home intoxicated to madness.

"Ah!" he cried as he strode to and fro in his room. "It must not pass off thus; I positively must write some poetry."

Next morning his porter found some thirty pieces of paper lying about the room, with the following solitary line majestically inscribed at the head of each—otherwise blank—sheet:

O Love! O Love! thou prince of youth!

That morning Rodolphe, contrary to his usual habit, had awaked very early, and though he had slept very little, he got up at once.

"Ah, broad daylight already!" he cried. "Why, twelve hours to wait! What shall I do to fill those twelve eternities?"

Just then his eyes fell on his desk. The pen seemed to fidget, as if to say, "Work!"

"Work, ah, yes! A plague take prose! I will not stay here; the place stinks of ink."

He installed himself in a café where he was quite sure of meeting none of his friends. "They would see that I am in love," he told himself, "and shape my ideal in advance for me." So after a succinct repast Rodolphe hastened to the railway station, took the train, and in half an hour was out in the woods of Ville d'Avray. There set at freedom in a world grown young with spring, he spent the whole day in walking about, and only came back to Paris at nightfall.

First of all Rodolphe put the temple in order for the reception of the idol; then he dressed himself for the occasion, regretting as he did so that a white costume was out of the question.

From seven o'clock till eight he suffered from a sharp, feverish attack of suspense. The slow torture recalled old days to his mind, and the ancient loves which lent them charm. And, faithful to his habit, he fell a-dreaming of a heroic passion, a ten-volume love, a perfect lyrical poem, with moonlit nights and sunsets and meetings under the willow tree and sighs and jealousy and all the rest of it. It was always the same with him whenever chance threw a woman in his way; nor did the fair one ever quit him without an aureole about her head and a necklet of tears.

"They would much prefer a hat or a pair of shoes," remonstrated his friends, but Rodolphe was obdurate, nor hitherto had his tolerably numerous blunders cured him. He was always on the lookout for a woman who should consent to pose as his idol; an angel in velvet to whom he might indite sonnets on willow leaves at his leisure.

At last the "hallowed hour" struck, and as Rodolphe heard the last stroke sound with a sonorous clang of bell metal, it seemed to him that he saw the alabaster Cupid and Psyche above his timepiece arise and fall into each other's arms. And at that very moment somebody gave a couple of timid taps on his door.

Rodolphe went to open it, and there stood Louise.

"I have kept my word, you see," she said.

Rodolphe drew the curtains and lighted a new wax candle; and the girl meanwhile took off her hat and shawl and laid them on the bed.

Louise was charming rather than pretty, with a piquant mixture of simplicity and mischief in her face, somehow suggesting one of Greuze's themes treated by Gavarni. All her winning, girlish charm was still further heightened by a toilet which, simple though it was, showed that she understood the science of coquetry, a science

innate in every woman, from her first long clothes to her wedding dress. Louise appeared, besides, to have made a special study of the theory of attitudes; for as Rodolphe looked at her more closely with an artist's eye, she tried for his benefit a great variety of graceful poses, the charm of her movements being for the most part of the studied order. The slenderness of her daintily shod feet, however, left nothing to be desired—not even by a Romantic with a fancy for the miniature proportions of the Andalusians or Chinese; as for her hands, it was plain from their delicate texture that they did no work, and indeed for the past six months they had had nothing to fear from needle pricks. To tell the whole truth, Louise was one of the birds of passage whom fancy, or oftener still necessity, leads to make their nest for a day, or rather for a night, in some garret in the Latin Quarter, where they will sometimes stay for several days, held willing captives by a riband or a whim.

After an hour's chat with Louise, Rodolphe pointed by way of example to the Cupid and Psyche.

"Is that Paul and Virginia?" asked she.

"Yes," said Rodolphe, unwilling to vex her by a contradiction at the outset.

"It is very like," returned Louise.

"Alas!" sighed Rodolphe as he looked at her. "The poor child has not very much literature. I feel sure that she only knows the orthography of the heart, which knows no 's' in the plural. I must buy her a grammar."

While he thus meditated, Louise complained that her shoes hurt her, and he obligingly was helping her to unlace them, when all on a sudden the light went out.

"There!" exclaimed Rodolphe, "who can have blown out the candle?"

A joyous burst of laughter answered him.

Some days later Rodolphe met a friend who accosted him in the street.

"Why, what are you doing? You have dropped out of sight."

"Making poetry out of my own experience," returned Rodolphe, and the unfortunate young man told the truth.

He had asked more of Louise than the poor child could give him. Your little hurdy-gurdy cannot give out the notes of the lyre, and Louise used to talk, as one may say, the *patois* of love, while Rodolphe insisted that she should use poetical language. So they understood each other somewhat imperfectly.

A week later, at the very dancing saloon where she met Rodolphe, Louise came across a fair-haired young fellow, who danced a good many dances with her and ended by taking her home.

He was a second-year student; he spoke the prose language of pleasure very well; he had fine eyes, and pockets that jingled musically.

Louise asked him for paper and ink, and wrote Rodolphe a letter thus conceived:

Dont count on mee any more. One larst kiss and good-by. LOUISE.

As Rodolphe read this epistle that night, when he came in, the light suddenly went out.

"There!" he said to himself meditatively. "That is the very candle which I lighted when Louise came that evening; it is fitting that it should burn out now that all is over between us."

One day when Rodolphe was with Marcel he picked up a scrap of paper off the floor to light his pipe, and recognized Louise's handwriting and spelling.

"I possess an autograph of the same writer," he remarked to his friend, "only in mine there are two fewer mistakes in spelling. Does that not show that she loved me better?"

"It proves that you are a fool," returned Marcel; "white arms and shoulders have no need of grammar."

H.G.^{by} Wells

Author of



'Tono-Bungay'

Ann Veronica

In Three Parts.....Part III

CHAPTER XI.

THE SUFFRAGETTES.

THERE is only one way out of all this," said Ann Veronica, sitting up in her little bed in the darkness and biting at her nails.

"I thought I was just up against Morningside Park and father, but it's the whole order of things—the whole blessed order of things."

She shivered. She frowned and gripped her hands about her knees very tightly. Her mind developed into savage wrath at the present conditions of a woman's life.

"I suppose all life is an affair of chances. But a woman's life is all chance. It's artificially chance. Find your man, that's the rule. All the rest is humbug and delicacy. He's the handle of life for you. He will let you live if it pleases him.

"Can't it be altered?"

"I suppose an actress is free?"

She tried to think of some altered state of affairs in which these monstrous limitations would be alleviated, in which women would stand on their own feet in equal citizenship with men. For a time she brooded on the ideals and suggestions of the Socialists, on the vague intimations of an Endowment of Motherhood, of a complete relaxation of that intense individual dependence for women which is woven into the existing social order. At the back of her mind there seemed always one irrelevant, qualifying spectator whose presence she sought to disregard. She would not look at him, would not think of him; when her mind wavered, then she muttered to herself in the darkness so as to keep hold of her generalizations.

"It is true. It is no good waiving the thing; it is true. Unless women are never to be free, never to be even respected, there must be a generation of martyrs. Why shouldn't we be martyrs? There's nothing else for most

of us, anyhow. It's a sort of blacklegging to want to have a life of one's own."

She repeated, as if she answered an objector: "A sort of blacklegging.

"A sex of blacklegging clients."

Her mind diverged to other aspects, and another type of womanhood.

"Poor little Miniver! What can she be but what she is? Because she states her case in a tangle, drags it through swamps of nonsense, it doesn't alter the fact that she is right."

That phrase about dragging the truth through swamps of nonsense she remembered from Capes. At the recollection that it was his, she seemed to fall through a thin surface, as one might fall through a crust of lava into glowing depths. She wallowed for a time in the thought of Capes, unable to escape from his image and the idea of his presence in her life.

She let her mind run into dreams of that cloud paradise of an altered world in which the Goopes and Minivers, the Fabians and reforming people believed. Across the world was written in letters of light, "Endowment of Motherhood." Suppose, in some complex yet conceivable way, women were endowed, were no longer economically and socially dependent on men. "If one was free," she said, "one could go to him. This vile hovering to catch a man's eye! One could go to him and tell him one loved him. I want to love him. A little love from him would be enough. It would hurt no one. It would not burden him with any obligation."

She groaned aloud and bowed her forehead to her knees. She floundered deep. She wanted to kiss his feet.

Then suddenly her spirit rose in revolt. "I will not have this slavery," she said. "I will not have this slavery."

She shook her fist ceilingward. "Do you hear!" she said, "whatever you are, wherever you are! I will not be slave to the thought of any man, slave to his

customs of any time. Confound this slavery of sex! I am a man! I will get this under if I am killed in doing it!"

She scowled into the cold blacknesses about her.

"Manning," she said, and contemplated a figure of inaggressive persistence. "No!" Her thoughts had turned in a new direction.

"It doesn't matter," she said, after a long interval, "if they are absurd. They mean something. They mean everything that women can mean—except submission. The vote is only the beginning, the necessary beginning. If we do not begin——"

She had come to a resolution. Abruptly she got out of bed, smoothed her sheet and straightened her pillow and lay down, and fell almost instantly asleep.

The next morning was as dark and foggy as if it was mid-November instead of early March. Ann Veronica woke rather later than usual, and lay awake for some minutes before she remembered a certain resolution she had taken in the small hours. Then instantly she got out of bed and proceeded to dress.

She did not start for the Imperial College. She spent the morning up to ten in writing a series of unsuccessful letters to Ramage, which she tore up unfinished; and finally she desisted and put on her jacket and went out into the lamp-lit obscurity and slimy streets. She turned a resolute face southward.

She followed Oxford Street into Holborn, and then she inquired for Chancery Lane. There she sought and at last found 107A, one of those heterogeneous piles of offices which occupy the eastern side of the lane. She studied the painted names of firms and persons and enterprises on the wall, and discovered that the Women's Bond of Freedom occupied several contiguous suites on the

first floor. She went upstairs and hesitated between four doors with ground-glass panes, each of which professed "The Women's Bond of Freedom" in neat black letters. She opened one and found herself in a large, untidy room set with chairs that were a little disarranged as if by an overnight meeting. On the walls were notice boards bearing clusters of newspaper slips, three or four big posters of monster meetings, one of which Ann Veronica had attended with Miss Miniver, and a series of announcements in purple copying ink, and in one corner was a pile of banners. There was no one at all in this room, but through the half-open door of one of the small apartments that gave upon it she had a glimpse of two very young girls sitting at a littered table and writing briskly.

She walked across to this apartment and, opening the door a little wider, discovered a press section of the movement at work.

"I want to inquire," said Ann Veronica.

"Next door," said a spectacled young person of seventeen or eighteen, with an impatient indication of the direction.

In the adjacent apartment Ann Veronica found a middle-aged woman with a tired face under the tired hat she wore, sitting at a desk opening letters, while a dusky, untidy girl of eight- or nine-and-twenty hammered industriously at a typewriter. The tired woman looked up in inquiring silence at Ann Veronica's diffident entry.

"I want to know more about this movement," said Ann Veronica.

"Are you with us?" said the tired woman.

"I don't know," said Ann Veronica; "I think I am. I want very much to do something for women. But I want to know what you are doing."

The tired woman sat still for a moment. "You haven't come here to make a lot of difficulties?" she asked.

"No," said Ann Veronica; "but I want to know."

The tired woman shut her eyes tightly for a moment, and then looked with them at Ann Veronica. "What can you do?" she asked.

"Do?"

"Are you prepared to do things for us? Distribute bills? Write letters? Interrupt meetings? Canvass at elections? Face dangers?"

"If I am satisfied——"

"If we satisfy you?"

"Then, if possible, I would like to go to prison."

"It isn't nice going to prison."

"It would suit me."

"It isn't nice getting there."

"That's a question of detail," said Ann Veronica.

The tired woman looked quietly at her. "What are your objections?" she said.

"It isn't objections exactly. I want to know what you are doing; how you think this work of yours really does serve women."

"We are working for the equal citizenship of men and women," said the tired woman. "Women have been and are treated as the inferiors of men; we want to make them their equals."

"Yes," said Ann Veronica; "I agree to that. But——"

The tired woman raised her eyebrows in mild protest.

"Isn't the question more complicated than that?" said Ann Veronica.

"You could have a talk to Miss Kitty Brett this afternoon, if you liked. Shall I make an appointment for you?"

Miss Kitty Brett was one of the most conspicuous leaders of the movement. Ann Veronica snatched at the opportunity, and spent most of the intervening time in the Assyrian Court of the British Museum, reading and thinking over a little book upon the feminist movement the tired woman had made her buy. She got a bun and some cocoa

in the little refreshment room, and then wandered through the galleries upstairs, crowded with Polynesian idols and Polynesian dancing garments, and all the simple, immodest accessories to life in Polynesia, to a seat among the mummies. She was trying to bring her problems to a head, and her mind insisted upon being even more discursive and atmospheric than usual. It generalized everything she put to it.

"Why should women be dependent on men?" she asked; and the question was at once converted into a system of variations upon the theme of "Why are things as they are?" "Why are human beings viviparous?" "Why are people hungry thrice a day?" "Why does one faint at danger?"

She stood for a time looking at the dry limbs and still human face of that desiccated, unwrapped mummy from the very beginnings of social life. It looked very patient, she thought, and a little self-satisfied. It looked as if it had taken its world for granted and prospered on that assumption—a world in which children were trained to obey their elders, and the wills of women overruled as a matter of course. It was wonderful to think this thing had lived, had felt and suffered. Perhaps once it had desired some other human being intolerably. Perhaps some one had kissed the brow that was now so cadaverous, rubbed that sunken cheek with loving fingers, held that stringy neck with passionately living hands. But all of that was forgotten. "In the end," it seemed to be thinking, "they embalmed me with the utmost respect—sound spices chosen to endure—the best! I took my world as I found it. *Things are so!*"

Ann Veronica's first impression of Kitty Brett was that she was aggressive and disagreeable; her next that she was a person of amazing persuasive power. She was perhaps three-and-twenty, and

very pink and healthy-looking, showing a great deal of white and rounded neck above her businesslike but altogether feminine blouse, and a good deal of plump, gesticulating forearm out of her short sleeve. She had animated, dark, blue-gray eyes under her fine eyebrows, and dark brown hair that rolled back simply and effectively from her broad, low forehead. And she was about as capable of intelligent argument as a runaway steam roller. She was a trained being—trained by an implacable mother to one end.

She spoke with fluent enthusiasm. She did not so much deal with Ann Veronica's interpolations as dispose of them with quick and use-hardened repartee, and then she went on with a fine directness to sketch the case for her agitation, for that remarkable rebellion of the women that was then agitating the whole world of politics and discussion. She assumed with a kind of mesmeric force all the propositions that Ann Veronica wanted her to define.

"What do we want? What is the goal?" asked Ann Veronica.

"Freedom! Citizenship! And the way to that—the way to everything—is the Vote."

Ann Veronica said something about a general change of ideas.

"How can you change people's ideas if you have no power?" said Kitty Brett.

Ann Veronica was not ready to deal with that counterstroke.

"One doesn't want to turn the whole thing into a mere sex antagonism."

"When women get justice," said Kitty Brett, "there will be no sex antagonism. None at all. Until then we mean to keep on hammering away."

"It seems to me that much of a woman's difficulties are economic."

"That will follow," said Kitty Brett; "that will follow."

She interrupted as Ann Veronica was about to speak again, with a bright, con-

tagious hopefulness. "Everything will follow," she said.

"Yes," said Ann Veronica, trying to think where they were, trying to get things plain again that had seemed plain enough in the quiet of the night.

"Nothing was ever done," Miss Brett asserted, "without a certain element of faith. After we have got the Vote and are recognized as citizens, then we can come to all these other things."

Even in the glamour of Miss Brett's assurance it seemed to Ann Veronica that this was, after all, no more than the gospel of Miss Miniver with a new set of resonances. And like that gospel it meant something, something different from its phrases, something elusive, and yet something that in spite of the superficial incoherence of its phrasing, was largely, essentially true. There was something holding women down, holding women back, and if it wasn't exactly man-made law, man-made law was an aspect of it. There was something indeed holding the whole species back from the imaginable largeness of life.

"The Vote is the symbol of everything," said Miss Brett.

She made an abrupt personal appeal.

"Oh! please don't lose yourself in a wilderness of secondary considerations," she said. "Don't ask me to tell you all that women can do, all that women can be. There is a new life, different from the old life of dependence, possible. If only we are not divided. If only we work together. This is the one movement that brings women of different classes together for a common purpose. If you could see how it gives them souls, women who have taken things for granted, who have given themselves up altogether to pettiness and vanity."

"Give me something to do," said Ann Veronica interrupting her persuasions at last. "It has been very kind of you to see me, but I don't want to sit and talk and use your time any longer. I want to do something. I want to ham-

mer myself against all this that pens women in. I feel that I shall stifle unless I can do something—and do something soon."

It was not Ann Veronica's fault that the night's work should have taken upon itself the forms of wild burlesque. She was in deadly earnest in everything she did. It seemed to her the last desperate attack upon the universe that would not let her live as she desired to live, that penned her in and controlled her and directed her and disapproved of her, the same invincible wrapping, the same leaden tyranny of a universe that she had vowed to overcome after that memorable conflict with her father at Morningside Park.

She was listed for the raid—she was informed it was to be a raid upon the House of Commons, though no particulars were given her—and told to go alone to 14 Dexter Street, Westminster, and not to ask any policeman to direct her. 14 Dexter Street, Westminster, she found was not a house but a yard in an obscure street, with big gates and the name of Podgers & Carlo, Carriers and Furniture Removers, thereon. She was perplexed by this, and stood for some seconds in the empty street hesitating, until the appearance of another circumspect woman under the street lamp at the corner reassured her. In one of the big gates was a little door, and she rapped at this. It was immediately opened by a man with light eyelashes and a manner suggestive of restrained passion. "Come right in," he hissed under his breath, with the true conspirator's note, closed the door very softly and pointed: "Through there!"

By the meager light of a gas lamp she perceived a cobbled yard with four large furniture vans standing with horses and lamps alight. A slender young man, wearing glasses, appeared from the shadow of the nearest van. "Are you A, B, C, or D?" he asked.

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By the meager light of a gas lamp she perceived a cobbled yard with four large furniture vans standing with horses and lamps alight. A slender young man, wearing glasses, appeared from the shadow of the nearest van. "Are you A, B, C, or D?" he asked.

"They told me D," said Ann Veronica.

"Through there," he said, and pointed with the pamphlet he was carrying.

Ann Veronica found herself in a little stirring crowd of excited women, whispering and tittering and speaking in undertones.

The light was poor, so that she saw their gleaming faces dimly and indistinctly. No one spoke to her. She stood among them, watching them and feeling curiously alien to them. The oblique, ruddy lighting distorted them oddly, made queer bars and patches of shadow upon their clothes. "It's Kitty's idea," said one; "we are to go in the vans."

"Kitty is wonderful," said another.

"Wonderful!"

"I have always longed for prison service," said a voice, "always. From the beginning. But it's only now I'm able to do it."

A little blond creature close at hand suddenly gave way to a fit of hysterical laughter, and caught up the end of it with a sob.

"Before I took up the Suffrage," a firm, flat voice remarked, "I could scarcely walk upstairs without palpitations."

Some one hidden from Ann Veronica appeared to be marshaling the assembly. "We have to get in, I think," said a nice little old lady in a bonnet to Ann Veronica, speaking with a voice that quavered a little. "My dear, can you see in this light? I think I would like to get in. Which is C?"

Ann Veronica, with a curious sinking of the heart, regarded the black cavities of the vans. Their doors stood open, and placards with big letters indicated the section assigned to each. She directed the little old woman and then made her way to van D. A young woman with a white badge on her arm stood and counted the sections as they entered their vans.

"When they tap the roof," she said, in a voice of authority, "you are to come out. You will be opposite the big entrance in Old Palace Yard. It's the public entrance. You are to make for that and get into the lobby if you can, and so try and reach the floor of the House, crying 'Votes for Women!' as you go."

She spoke like a mistress addressing school children.

"Don't bunch too much as you come out," she added.

"All right?" asked the man with the light eyelashes, suddenly appearing in the doorway. He waited for an instant, wasting an encouraging smile in the imperfect light, and then shut the doors of the van, leaving the women in darkness.

The van started with a jerk and rumbled on its way.

"It's like Troy!" said a voice of rapture. "It's exactly like Troy!"

So Ann Veronica, enterprising and a little dubious as ever, mingled with the stream of history and wrote her Christian name upon the police-court records of the land.

But out of a belated regard for her father she wrote the surname of some one else.

Some day, when the rewards of literature permit the arduous research required, the Campaign of the Women will find its Carlyle, and the particulars of that marvelous series of exploits by which Miss Brett and her colleagues nagged the whole Western world into the discussion of women's position become the material for the most delightful and amazing descriptions. At present the world waits for that writer, and the confused record of the newspapers remains the only resource of the curious. When he comes, he will do that raid of the pantehnicons the justice it deserves; he will picture the orderly evening scene about the Imperial Legisla-

ture in convincing detail; the coming and going of cabs and motor-cabs and broughams through the chill, damp evening into New Palace Yard, the reinforced but untroubled and unsuspecting police about the entries of those great buildings whose square and paneled Victorian Gothic streams up from the glare of the lamps into the murkiness of the night; Big Ben shining overhead, an unassailable beacon, and the incidental traffic of Westminster, cabs, carts, and glowing omnibuses going to and from the bridge. About the Abbey and Abingdon Street stood the outer pickets and detachments of the police, their attention all directed westward to where the women in Caxton Hall, Westminster, hummed like an angry hive. Squads reached to the very portal of that center of disturbance. And through all these defenses and into Old Palace Yard, into the very vitals of the defenders' position, lumbered the unsuspected vans.

They traveled past the few idle sight-seers who had braved the uninviting evening to see what the Suffragettes might be doing; they pulled up unchallenged within thirty yards of those coveted portals.

And then they disgorged.

Were I a painter of subject pictures, I would exhaust my skill in proportion and perspective and atmosphere upon the august seat of empire, I would present it gray and dignified and immense and respectable beyond any mere verbal description, and then, in vivid black and very small, I would put in those valiantly impertinent vans, squatting at the base of its altitudes and pouring out a swift, straggling rush of ominous little black objects, minute figures of determined women at war with the universe.

Ann Veronica was in their very forefront.

In an instant the expectant calm of Westminster was ended, and the very

speaker in the chair blanched at the sound of the policemen's whistles. The bolder members of the House left their places to go lobbyward, grinning. Others pulled hats over their noses, cowered in their seats, and feigned that all was right with the world. In Old Palace Yard everybody ran. They either ran to see or ran for shelter. Even two cabinet ministers took to their heels, grinning insincerely. At the opening of the van doors and the emergence into the fresh air Ann Veronica's doubt and depression gave place to the wildest exhilaration. That same adventurousness that had already buoyed her through crises that would have overwhelmed any normally feminine girl with shame and horror now became uppermost again. Before her was a great Gothic portal. Through that she had to go.

Past her shot the little old lady in the bonnet, running incredibly fast, but otherwise alertly respectable, and she was making a strange, threatening sound as she ran, such as one would use in driving ducks out of a garden—"B-r-r-r-r—!" and pawing with black-gloved hands. The policemen were closing in from the sides to intervene. The little old lady struck like a projectile upon the resounding chest of the foremost of these, and then Ann Veronica had got past and was ascending the steps.

Then most horribly she was clasped about the waist from behind and lifted from the ground.

At that a new element poured into her excitement, an element of wild disgust and terror. She had never experienced anything so disagreeable in her life as the sense of being held helplessly off her feet. She screamed involuntarily—she had never in her life screamed before—and then she began to wriggle and fight like a frightened animal against the men who were holding her.

The affair passed at one leap from a

spree to a nightmare of violence and disgust. Her hair got loose, her hat came over one eye, and she had no arm free to replace it. She felt she must suffocate if these men did not put her down, and for a time they would not put her down. Then with an indescribable relief her feet were on the pavement, and she was being urged along by two policemen who were gripping her wrists in an irresistible, expert manner. She was writhing to get her hands loose and found herself gasping with passionate violence, "It's damnable!—damnable!" to the manifest disgust of the fatherly policeman on her right.

Then they had released her arms and were trying to push her away. "You be off, missie," said the fatherly policeman. "This ain't no place for you."

He pushed her a dozen yards along the greasy pavement with flat, well-trained hands that there seemed to be no opposing. Before her stretched blank spaces, dotted with running people coming toward her, and below them railings with a statue. She almost submitted to this ending of her adventure. But at the word "home" she turned again.

"I won't go home," she said; "I won't!" and she evaded the clutch of the fatherly policeman and tried to thrust herself past him in the direction of that big portal. "Steady on!" he cried.

A diversion was created by the violent struggles of the little old lady. She seemed to be endowed with superhuman strength. A knot of three policemen in conflict with her staggered toward Ann Veronica's attendants and distracted their attention. "*I will* be arrested! *I won't* go home!" the little, old lady was screaming over and over again. They put her down, and she leaped at them; she smote a helmet to the ground.

"You'll have to take her!" shouted an inspector on horseback, and she echoed his cry: "You'll have to take me!" They seized upon her and lifted her, and she screamed. Ann Veronica became vio-

lently excited at the sight. "You cowards!" said Ann Veronica, "put her down!" and tore herself from a detaining hand and battered with her fists upon the big red ear and blue shoulder of the policeman who held the little old lady.

So Ann Veronica was also arrested.

And then came the vile experience of being forced and borne along the street to the police station. Whatever anticipation Ann Veronica had formed of this vanished in the reality. Presently she was going through a swaying, noisy crowd, whose faces grinned and stared pitilessly in the light of the electric standards. "Go it, miss!" cried one. "Kick aht at 'em!" though, indeed, she went now with Christian meekness, representing only the thrusting policeman's hands. Several people in the crowd seemed to be fighting. Insulting cries became frequent and various, but for the most part she could not understand what was said. "Who'll mind the baby nar?" was one of the night's inspirations, and very frequent. A lean young man in spectacles pursued her for some time, crying "Courage! Courage!" Somebody threw a dab of mud at her, and some of it got down her neck. Immeasurable disgust possessed her. She felt dragged and insulted beyond redemption. She could not hide her face. She attempted by a sheer act of will to end the scene, to will herself out of it anywhere. She had a horrible glimpse of the once nice little old lady being also borne stationward, still faintly battling and very muddy—one lock of grayish hair straggling over her neck, her face scared, white, but triumphant. Her bonnet dropped off and was trampled into the gutter. A little cockney recovered it, and made ridiculous attempts to get to her and replace it.

"You must arrest me!" she gasped, breathlessly, insisting insanely on a point already carried; "you shall!"

The police station at the end seemed to Ann Veronica like a refuge from un-

namable disgraces. She hesitated about her name, and, being prompted, gave it at last as Ann Veronica Smith, 107A, Chancery Lane.

Indignation carried her through that night, that men and the world could so entreat her. The arrested women were herded in a passage of the Pantom Street police station that opened upon a cell too unclean for occupation, and most of them spent the night standing. Hot coffee and cakes were sent in to them in the morning by some intelligent sympathizer, or she would have starved all day. Submission to the inevitable carried her through the circumstances of her appearance before the magistrate.

He was no doubt doing his best to express the attitude of society toward these wearily heroic defendants, but he seemed to be merely rude and unfair to Ann Veronica. He was not, it seemed, the proper stipendiary at all, and there had been some demur to his jurisdiction that had ruffled him. He resented being regarded as irregular. He felt he was human wisdom prudentially interpolated.

"You silly wimmin," he said over and over again throughout the hearing, plucking at his blotting pad with busy hands. "You silly creatures! Ugh! Fie upon you!" The court was crowded with people, for the most part supporters and admirers of the defendants, and the man with the light eyelashes was conspicuously active and omnipresent.

Ann Veronica's appearance was brief and undistinguished. She had nothing to say for herself. She was guided into the dock and prompted by a helpful police inspector. She was aware of the body of the court, of clerks seated at a black table littered with papers, of policemen standing about stiffly with expressions of conscious integrity, and a murmuring background of the heads and shoulders of spectators close behind her. On a high chair behind a raised counter the stipendiary's substitute regarded her

malevolently over his glasses. A disagreeable young man, with red hair and a loose mouth, seated at the reporter's table, was only too manifestly sketching her.

She was interested by the swearing of the witnesses, the kissing of the book struck her as particularly odd, and then the policemen gave their evidence in staccato jerks and stereotyped phrases.

"Have you anything to ask the witness?" asked the helpful inspector.

The ribald demons that infested the back of Ann Veronica's mind urged various facetious interrogations upon her, as, for example, where the witness had acquired his prose style. She controlled herself, and answered meekly, "No."

"Well, Ann Veronica Smith," the magistrate remarked when the case was all before him, "you're a good-looking, strong, respectable gell, and it's a pity you silly young wimmin can't find something better to do with your exuberance. Two-and-twenty! I can't imagine what your parents can be thinking about to let you get into these scrapes."

Ann Veronica's mind was filled with confused, unutterable replies.

"You are persuaded to come and take part in these outrageous proceedings—many of you, I am convinced, have no idea whatever of their nature. I don't suppose you could tell me even the derivation of suffrage if I asked you. No! not even the derivation! But the fashion's been set and in it you must be."

The men at the reporter's table lifted their eyebrows, smiled faintly, and leaned back to watch how she took her scolding. One with the appearance of a bald little gnome yawned agonizingly. They had got all this down already—they heard the substance of it now for the fourteenth time. The stipendiary would have done it all very differently.

She found presently she was out of the dock and confronted with the al-

ternative of being bound over in one surety for the sum of forty pounds—whatever that might mean—or a month's imprisonment. "Second class," said some one, but first and second were all alike to her. She elected to go to prison.

At last, after a long, rumbling journey in a stuffy, windowless van, she reached Canongate Prison—for Holloway had its quota already. It was bad luck to go to Canongate.

Prison was beastly. Prison was bleak without spaciousness, and pervaded by a faint, oppressive smell; and she had to wait two hours in the sullenly defiant company of two unclean women thieves before a cell could be assigned to her. Its dreariness, like the filthiness of the police cell, was a discovery for her. She had imagined that prisons were white-tiled places, reeking of lime-wash and immaculately sanitary. Instead, they appeared to be at the hygienic level of tramps' lodging houses. She was bathed in turbid water that had already been used. She was not allowed to bathe herself: another prisoner, with a privileged manner, washed her. Conscientious objectors to that process are not permitted, she found, in Canongate. Her hair was washed for her also. Then they dressed her in a dirty dress of coarse serge and a cap, and took away her own clothes. The dress came to her only too manifestly unwashed from its former wearer; even the under linen they gave her seemed unclean. Horrible memories of things seen beneath the microscope, of the baser forms of life, crawled across her mind and set her shuddering with imagined irritations. She sat on the edge of the bed—the wardress was too busy with the flood of arrivals that day to discover that she had it down—and her skin was shivering from the contact of these garments. She surveyed accommodations that seemed at first merely austere, and became more and more manifestly inadequate as the

moments fled by. She meditated profoundly through several enormous cold hours on all that had happened and all that she had done since the swirl of the suffrage movement had submerged her personal affairs.

Very slowly emerging out of a phase of stupefaction, these personal affairs and her personal problem resumed possession of her mind. She had imagined she had drowned them altogether.

CHAPTER XII.

THOUGHTS IN PRISON.

The first night in prison she found it impossible to sleep. The bed was hard beyond any experience of hers, the bed-clothes coarse and insufficient, the cell at once cold and stuffy. The little grating in the door, the sense of constant inspection, worried her. She kept opening her eyes and looking at it. She was fatigued physically and mentally, and neither mind nor body could rest. She became aware that at regular intervals a light flashed upon her face and a bodiless eye regarded her, and this, as the night wore on, became a torment.

Capes came back into her mind. He haunted a state between hectic dreaming and mild delirium and she found herself talking aloud to him. All through the night an entirely impossible and monumental Capes confronted her, and she argued with him about men and women. She visualized him as in a policeman's uniform and quite impassive. On some insane score she fancied she had to state her case in verse. "We are the music and you are the instrument," she said; "we are verse and you are prose.

"For men have reason, women rhyme;
A man scores always, all the time."

This couplet sprang into her mind from nowhere, and immediately begot an endless series of similar couplets that she began to compose and address to

Capes. They came teeming distress-fully through her aching brain:

A man can kick, his skirts don't tear;
A man scores always, everywhere.

His dress for no man lays a snare;
A man scores always, everywhere.

For hats that fail and hats that flare;
Toppers their universal wear;
A man scores always, everywhere.

Men's waists are neither here nor there;
A man scores always, everywhere.

A man can manage without hair;
A man scores always, everywhere.

There are no males at men to stare;
A man scores always, everywhere.

And children must we women bear—

"Oh, damn!" she cried, as the hundred-and-first couplet or so presented itself in her unwilling brain.

For a time she worried about that compulsory bath and cutaneous diseases.

Then she fell into a fever of remorse for the habit of bad language she had acquired.

A man can smoke, a man can swear;
A man scores always, everywhere.

She rolled over on her face, and stuffed her fingers in her ears to shut out the rhythm from her mind. She lay still for a long time, and her mind resumed at a more tolerable pace. She found herself talking to Capes in an undertone of rational admission.

There is something to be said for the ladylike theory after all," she admitted. "Women ought to be gentle and submissive persons, strong only in virtue and in resistance to evil compulsion. My dear—I can call you that here, anyhow—I know that. The Victorians overdid it a little, I admit. Their idea of maidenly innocence was just a blank white—the sort of flat white that doesn't shine. But that doesn't alter the fact that there *is* innocence. And I've read,

and thought, and guessed, and looked—until my innocence—it's smirched.

"Smirched!

"You see, dear, one *is* passionately anxious for something—what is it? One wants to be *clean*. You want me to be clean. You would want me to be clean, if you gave me a thought, that is.

"I wonder if you give me a thought.

"I'm not a good woman. I don't mean I'm not a good woman—I mean that I'm not a *good* woman. My poor brain is so mixed, dear, I hardly know what I am saying. I mean I'm not a good specimen of a woman. I've got a streak of male. Things happen to women—proper women—and all they have to do is to take them well. They've just got to keep white. But I'm always trying to make things happen. And I get myself dirty.

"It's all dirt that washes off, dear, but it's dirt.

"The white, unaggressive woman who corrects and nurses and serves, and is worshiped and betrayed—the martyr-queen of men, the white mother. You can't do that sort of thing unless you do it over religion, and there's no religion in me—of that sort—worth a rap.

"I'm not gentle. Certainly not a gentlewoman.

"I'm not coarse—no! But I've got no purity of mind—no real purity of mind. A good woman's mind has angels with flaming swords at the portals to keep out fallen thoughts.

"I wonder if there are any good women really.

"I wish I didn't swear. I do swear. It began as a joke. It developed into a sort of secret and private bad manners. It's got to be at last like tobacco ash over all my sayings and doings.

"'Go it, missie,' they said; 'kick ah!'

"I swore at that policeman—and disgusted him. Disgusted him!

"For men policemen never blush;
A man in all things scores so much.

"Damn! Things are getting plainer. It must be the dawn creeping in.

"Now here hath been dawning another blue day;

I'm just a poor woman, please take it away.

"Oh, sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep!"

"Now," said Ann Veronica, after the half hour of exercise, and sitting on the uncomfortable wooden seat without a back that was her perch by day, "it's no good staying here in a sort of maze. I've got nothing to do for a month but think. I may as well think. I ought to be able to think things out.

"How shall I put the question? What am I? What have I got to do with myself?

"I wonder if many people *have* thought things out?

"Are we all just seizing hold of phrases and obeying moods?

"It wasn't so with old-fashioned people; they knew right from wrong; they had a clear-cut, religious faith that seemed to explain everything and give a rule for everything. We haven't. I haven't, anyhow. And it's no good pretending there is one when there isn't. I suppose I believe in God. Never really thought about Him—people don't. I suppose my creed is, 'I believe rather indistinctly in God the Father Almighty, substratum of the evolutionary process, and, in a vein of vague sentimentality that doesn't give a datum for anything at all, in Jesus Christ, His Son.'

"It's no sort of good, Ann Veronica, pretending one does believe when one doesn't.

"And as for praying for faith—this sort of monologue is about as near as any one of my sort ever gets to prayer. Aren't I asking—asking plainly now?

"We've all been mixing our ideas, and we've got intellectual hot coppers—every blessed one of us.

"A confusion of motives—that's what I am!

"There is this absurd craving for Mr.

Capes—the 'Capes crave,' they would call it in America. Why do I want him so badly? Why do I want him, and think about him, and fail to get away from him?

"It isn't all of me.

"The first person you love, Ann Veronica, is yourself—get hold of that! The soul you have to save is Ann Veronica's soul."

She knelt upon the floor of her cell and clasped her hands, and remained for a long time in silence.

"Oh, God!" she said at last, "how I wish I had been taught to pray!"

She had some idea of putting these subtle and difficult issues to the chaplain when she was warned of his advent. But she had not reckoned with the etiquette of Canongate. She got up, as she had been told to do, at his appearance, and he amazed her by sitting down, according to custom, on her stool. He still wore his hat, to show that the days of miracles and Christ being civil to sinners are over forever. She perceived that his countenance was only composed by a great effort, his features severely compressed. He was ruffled, and his ears were red, no doubt from some adjacent controversy. He classified her as he seated himself.

"Another young woman, I suppose," he said, "who knows better than her Maker about her place in the world. Have you anything to ask me?"

Ann Veronica readjusted her mind hastily. Her back stiffened. She produced from the depths of her pride the ugly investigatory note of the modern district visitor. "Are you a special sort of clergyman," she said, after a pause, and looking down her nose at him, "or do you go to the Universities?"

"Oh," he said, profoundly.

He panted for a moment with unuttered replies, and then, with a scornful gesture, got up and left the cell.

So that Ann Veronica was not able

to get the expert advice she certainly needed upon her spiritual state.

After a day or so she thought more steadily. She found herself in a phase of violent reaction against the suffrage movement, a phase greatly promoted by one of those unreasonable objections people of Ann Veronica's temperament take at times—to the girl in the next cell to her own. She was a large, resilient girl, with a foolish smile, a still more foolish expression of earnestness, and a throaty, contralto voice. She was noisy and hilarious and enthusiastic, and her hair was always abominably done. In the chapel she sang with an open-lunged gusto that silenced Ann Veronica altogether, and in the exercising yard slouched round with carelessly dispersed feet. Ann Veronica decided that "hoydenish ragger" was the only phrase to express her. She was always breaking rules, whispering asides, intimating signals. She became at times an embodiment for Ann Veronica of all that made the suffrage movement defective and unsatisfying.

She was always initiating petty breaches of discipline. Her greatest exploit was the howling before the mid-day meal. This was an imitation of the noises made by the carnivora at the Zoological Gardens at feeding time; the idea was taken up by prisoner after prisoner until the whole place was alive with barkings, yappings, roarings, pelican chatterings, and feline yowlings, interspersed with shrieks of hysterical laughter. To many in that crowded solitude it came as an extraordinary relief. It was better even than the hymn singing. But it annoyed Ann Veronica.

"Idiots!" she said, when she heard this pandemonium, and with particular reference to this young lady with the throaty contralto next door. "Intolerable idiots!"

It took some days for this phase to pass, and it left some scars and some-

thing like a decision. "Violence won't do it," said Ann Veronica. "Begin violence, and the woman goes under. But all the rest of our case is right. Yes!"

As the long, solitary days wore on, Ann Veronica found a number of definite attitudes and conclusions in her mind.

One of these was a classification of women into women who are and women who are not hostile to men. "The real reason why I am out of place here," she said, "is because I like men. I can talk with them. I've never found them hostile. I've got no feminine class feeling. I don't want any laws or freedoms to protect me from a man like Mr. Capes. I know that in my heart I would take whatever he gave.

"A woman wants a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself. She wants that and needs it more than anything else in the world. It may not be just, it may not be fair, but things are so. It isn't law, nor custom, nor masculine violence settled that. It is just how things happen to be. She wants to be free—she wants to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man; but only God, who made the world, can alter things to prevent her being slave to the right one.

"And if she can't have the right one?

"We've developed such a quality of preference!"

She rubbed her knuckles into her forehead. "Oh, but life is difficult!" she groaned. "When you loosen the tangle in one place you tie a knot in another. Before there is any change, any real change, I shall be dead—dead—dead and finished—two hundred years!"

One afternoon, while everything was still, the wardress heard her cry out suddenly and alarmingly, and with great and unmistakable passion, "Why in the name of goodness did I burn that twenty pounds?"

She sat regarding her dinner. The meat was coarse and disagreeably served.

"I suppose some one makes a bit on the food," she said.

"One has such ridiculous ideas of the wicked common people and the beautiful machinery of order that ropes them in. And here are these places, full of contagion!

"Of course, this is the real texture of life; this is what we refined, secure people forget. We think the whole thing is straight and noble at bottom, and it isn't. We think if we just defy the friends we have and go out into the world everything will become easy and splendid. One doesn't realize that even the sort of civilization one has at Morningside Park is held together with difficulty. By policemen one mustn't shock.

"This isn't a world for an innocent girl to walk about in. It's a world of dirt and skin diseases and parasites. It's a world in which the law can be a stupid pig and the police stations dirty dens. One wants helpers and protectors—and clean water.

"Am I becoming reasonable or am I being tamed?

"I'm simply discovering that life is many-sided and complex and puzzling. I thought one had only to take it by the throat.

"It hasn't got a throat!"

One day the idea of self-sacrifice came into her head, and she made, she thought, some important moral discoveries.

It came with an extreme effect of rediscovery, a remarkable novelty. "What have I been all this time?" she asked herself, and answered, "Just stark egotism, crude assertion of Ann Veronica, without a modest rag of religion or discipline or respect for authority to cover me!"

It seemed to her as though she had at last found the touchstone of conduct.

She perceived she had never really thought of any one but herself in all her acts and plans. Even Capes had been for her merely an excitant to passionate love—a mere idol at whose feet one could enjoy imaginative wallowings. She had set out to get a beautiful life, a free, untrammelled life, self-development, without counting the cost either for herself or others.

"I have hurt my father," she said; "I have hurt my aunt. I have hurt and snubbed poor Teddy. I've made no one happy. I deserve pretty much what I've got.

"If only because of the way one hurts others if one kicks loose and free, one has to submit.

"Broken-in people! I suppose the world is just all egotistical children and broken-in people.

"Your little flag of pride must flutter down with the rest of them, Ann Veronica.

"Compromise—and kindness.

"Compromise and kindness.

"Who are *you* that the world should lie down at your feet?

"You've got to be a decent citizen, Ann Veronica. Take your half loaf with the others. You mustn't go clawing after a man that doesn't belong to you—that isn't even interested in you. That's one thing clear.

"You've got to take the decent, reasonable way. You've got to adjust yourself to the people God has set about you. Every one else does."

She thought more and more along that line. There was no reason why she shouldn't be Capes' friend. He did like her, anyhow; he was always pleased to be with her. There was no reason why she shouldn't be his restrained and dignified friend. After all, that was life. Nothing was given away, and no one came so rich to the stall as to command all that it had to offer. Every one has to make a deal with the world.

It would be very good to be Capes' friend.

She might be able to go on with biology, possibly even work upon the same questions that he dealt with.

Perhaps her granddaughter might marry his grandson.

It grew clear to her that throughout all her wild raid for independence she had done nothing for anybody, and many people had done things for her. She thought of her aunt and that purse that was dropped on the table, and of many troublesome and ill-required kindnesses: she thought of the help of the Widgetts, of Teddy's admiration; she thought, with a new-born charity, of her father, of Manning's conscientious unselfishness, of Miss Miniver's devotion.

"And for me it has been *Pride and Pride and Pride!*

"I am the prodigal daughter. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him—

"I suppose pride and self-assertion are sin? Sinned against heaven— Yes, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.

"Poor old daddy! I wonder if he'll spend much on the fatted calf?

"The wrapped life—discipline! One comes to that at last. I begin to understand Jane Austen and chintz covers and decency and refinement and all the rest of it. One puts gloves on one's greedy fingers. One learns to sit up.

"And somehow or other," she added, after a long interval, "I must pay Mr. Ramage back his forty pounds."

CHAPTER XIII.

ANN VERONICA PUTS THINGS IN ORDER

Ann Veronica made a strenuous attempt to carry out her good resolutions. She meditated long and carefully upon her letter to her father before she wrote it, and gravely and deliberately again before she dispatched it.

MY DEAR FATHER: I have been thinking hard about everything since I was sent to this prison. All these experiences have taught me a great deal about life and realities. I see that compromise is more necessary to life than I ignorantly supposed it to be, and I have been trying to get Lord Morley's book on that subject, but it does not appear to be available in the prison library, and the chaplain seems to regard him as an undesirable writer.

At this point she had perceived that she was drifting from her subject.

I must read him when I come out. But I see very clearly that as things are a daughter is necessarily dependent on her father and bound while she is in that position to live harmoniously with his ideals.

"Bit starchy," said Ann Veronica, and altered the key abruptly. Her concluding paragraph was, on the whole, perhaps, hardly starchy enough.

Really, daddy, I am sorry for all I have done to put you out. May I come home and try to be a better daughter to you?

ANN VERONICA.

Her aunt came to meet her outside Canongate, and, being a little confused between what was official and what was merely a rebellious slight upon our national justice, found herself involved in a triumphal procession to the Vindicator Vegetarian Restaurant, and was specifically and personally cheered by a small, shabby crowd outside that rendezvous. They decided quite audibly, "She's an old dear, anyhow. Voting wouldn't do no 'arm to 'er." She was on the very verge of a vegetarian meal before she recovered her head again. Obeying some fine instinct, she had come to the prison in a dark veil, but she had pushed this up to kiss Ann Veronica and never drawn it down again. Eggs were procured for her, and she sat out the subsequent emotions and eloquence with the dignity becoming an injured lady of good family. The quiet encounter and home-coming Ann Veronica and she had contemplated was entirely disorganized by this misadventure;

there were no adequate explanations, and after they had settled things at Ann Veronica's lodgings, they reached home in the early afternoon estranged and depressed, with headaches and the trumpet voice of the indomitable Kitty Brett still ringing in their ears.

"Dreadful women, my dear!" said Miss Stanley. "And some of them quite pretty and well dressed. No need to do such things. We must never let your father know we went. Why ever did you let me get into that wagonette?"

"I thought we had to," said Ann Veronica, who had also been a little under the compulsion of the marshals of the occasion. "It was very tiring."

"We will have some tea in the drawing-room as soon as ever we can—and I will take my things off. I don't think I shall ever care for this bonnet again. We'll have some buttered toast. Your poor cheeks are quite sunken and hollow."

When Ann Veronica found herself in her father's study that evening it seemed to her for a moment as though all the events of the past six months had been a dream. The big gray spaces of London, the shop-lit, greasy, shining streets, had become very remote; the biological laboratory with its work and emotions, the meetings and discussions, the rides in hansoms with Ramage, were like things in a book read and closed. The study seemed absolutely unaltered; there was still the same lamp with a little chip out of the shade, still the same gas fire, still the same bundle of blue and white papers, it seemed, with the same pink tape about them, at the elbow of the armchair, still the same father. He sat in much the same attitude, and she stood just as she had stood when he told her she could not go to the Fadden dance. Both had dropped the rather elaborate politeness of the dining room, and in their faces an impartial observer would have discovered little lines of ob-

stinate willfulness in common; a certain hardness—sharp, indeed, in the father and softly rounded in the daughter—but hardness nevertheless, that made every compromise a bargain and every charity a discount.

"And so you have been thinking?" her father began, quoting her letter and looking over his slanting glasses at her. "Well, my girl, I wish you had thought about all these things before these bothers began."

Ann Veronica perceived that she must not forget to remain eminently reasonable.

"One has to live and learn," she remarked, with a passable imitation of her father's manner.

"So long as you learn," said Mr. Stanley.

Their conversation hung.

"I suppose, daddy, you've no objection to my going on with my work at the Imperial College?" she asked.

"If it will keep you busy," he said, with a faintly ironical smile.

"The fees are paid to the end of the session."

He nodded twice, with his eyes on the fire, as though that was a formal statement.

"You may go on with that work," he said, "so long as you keep in harmony with things at home. I'm convinced that much of Russell's investigations are on wrong lines, unsound lines. Still—you must learn for yourself. You're of age—you're of age."

"The work's almost essential for the B.Sc. exam."

"It's scandalous, but I suppose it is."

Their agreement so far seemed remarkable, and yet as a home-coming the thing was a little lacking in warmth. But Ann Veronica had still to get to her chief topic. They were silent for a time. "It's a period of crude views and crude work," said Mr. Stanley. "Still, these Mendelian fellows seem likely to give Mr. Russell trouble, a good lot of

trouble. Some of their specimens—wonderfully selected, wonderfully got up."

"Daddy," said Ann Veronica, "these affairs—being away from home has—cost money."

"I thought you would find that out."

"As a matter of fact, I happen to have got a little into debt."

"Never!"

Her heart sank at the change in his expression.

"Well, lodgings and things! And I paid my fees at the College."

"Yes. But how could you get—Who gave you credit?"

"You see," said Ann Veronica, "my landlady kept on my room while I was in Holloway, and the fees for the College mounted up pretty considerably." She spoke rather quickly, because she found her father's question the most awkward she had ever had to answer in her life.

"Molly and you settled about the rooms. She said you *had* some money."

"I borrowed it," said Ann Veronica in a casual tone, with white despair in her heart.

"But who could have lent you money?"

"I pawned my pearl necklace. I got three pounds, and there's three on my watch."

"Six pounds. H'm. Got the tickets? Yes, but then—you said you borrowed?"

"I did, too," said Ann Veronica.

"Who from?"

She met his eye for a second and her heart failed her. The truth was impossible, indecent. If she mentioned Ramage he might have a fit—anything might happen. She lied. "The Widgets," she said.

"Tut, tut!" he said. "Really, Vee, you seem to have advertised our relations pretty generally!"

"They—they knew, of course. Because of the dance."

"How much do you owe them?"

She knew forty pounds was a quite impossible sum for their neighbors. She knew, too, she must not hesitate. "Eight pounds," she plunged, and added foolishly, "fifteen pounds will see me clear of everything." She muttered some unladylike comment upon herself under her breath and engaged in secret additions.

Mr. Stanley determined to improve the occasion. He seemed to deliberate. "Well," he said at last slowly, "I'll pay it. I'll pay it. But I do hope, Vee, I do hope—this is the end of these adventures. I hope you have learned your lesson now and come to see—come to realize—how things are. People—nobody, can do as they like in this world. Everywhere there are limitations."

"I know," said Ann Veronica—fifteen pounds! "I have learned that. I mean—I mean to do what I can." Fifteen pounds. Fifteen from forty is twenty-five.

He hesitated. She could think of nothing more to say.

"Well," she achieved at last. "Here goes for the new life!"

"Here goes for the new life!" he echoed and stood up. Father and daughter regarded each other warily, each more than a little insecure with the other. He made a movement toward her, and then recalled the circumstances of their last conversation in that study. She saw his purpose and his doubt, hesitated also, and then went to him, took his coat lapels, and kissed him on the cheek.

"Ah, Vee," he said, "that's better!" and kissed her back rather clumsily. "We're going to be sensible."

She disengaged herself from him and went out of the room with a grave, preoccupied expression.

Fifteen pounds! And she wanted forty.

It was, perhaps, the natural consequence of a long and tiring and exciting

day that Ann Veronica should pass a broken and distressful night, a night in which the noble and self-subduing resolutions of Canongate displayed themselves for the first time in an atmosphere of almost lurid dismay. Her father's peculiar stiffness of soul presented itself now as something altogether left out of the calculations upon which her plans were based, and, in particular, she had not anticipated the difficulty she would find in borrowing the forty pounds she needed for Ramage. That had taken her by surprise, and her tired wits had failed her. She was to have fifteen pounds, and no more. She knew that to expect more now was like anticipating a gold mine in the garden. The chance had gone. It became suddenly, glaringly apparent to her that it was impossible to return fifteen pounds or any sum less than twenty pounds to Ramage—absolutely impossible. She realized that with a pang of disgust and horror.

Already she had sent him twenty pounds, and never written to explain to him why it was she had not sent it back sharply, directly he returned it. She ought to have written at once and told him exactly what had happened. Now if she sent fifteen pounds the suggestion that she had spent a five-pound note in the meanwhile would be irresistible. No! That was impossible. She would have just to keep the fifteen pounds until she could make it twenty. That might happen on her birthday—in August.

She turned about, and was persecuted by visions, half memories, half dreams, of Ramage. He became ugly and monstrous, dunning her, threatening her, assailing her.

"Confound sex from first to last!" said Ann Veronica. "Why can't we propagate by sexless spores, as the ferns do? We restrict each other, we badger each other, friendship is poisoned and

buried under it! I *must* pay off that forty pounds. I *must*."

For a time there seemed no comfort for her even in Capes. She was to see Capes to-morrow, but now, in this state of misery she had achieved, she felt assured he would turn his back upon her, take no notice of her at all. And if he didn't, what was the good of seeing him? "I wish he was a woman," she said, "then I could make him my friend. I want him as my friend. I want to talk to him and go about with him. Just go about with him."

She was silent for a time, with her nose on the pillow, and that brought her to: "What's the good of pretending?"

"I love him," she said aloud to the dim forms of her room, and repeated it, and went on to imagine herself doing acts of tragically doglike devotion to the biologist, who, for the purposes of the drama, remained entirely unconscious of and indifferent to her proceedings.

At last some anodyne formed itself from these exercises, and, with eyelashes wet with such feeble tears as only three-o'clock-in-the-morning pathos and distill, she fell asleep.

Pursuant to some altogether private calculations she did not go up to the Imperial College until after mid-day, and she found the laboratory deserted, even as she desired. She went to the table under the end window at which she had been accustomed to work, and found it swept and garnished with full bottles of re-agents. Everything was very neat; it had evidently been straightened up and kept for her. She put down the sketch books and apparatus she had brought with her, pulled out her stool, and sat down. As she did so the preparation-room door opened behind her. She heard it open, but as she felt unable to look round in a careless manner she pretended not to hear it. Then Capes' footsteps approached. She turned with an effort.

"I expected you this morning," he said. "I saw—they knocked off your fetters yesterday."

"I think it is very good of me to come this afternoon."

"I began to be afraid you might not come at all."

"Afraid!"

"Yes. I'm glad you're back for all sorts of reasons." He spoke a little nervously. "Among other things, you know, I didn't understand quite—I didn't understand that you were so keenly interested in this suffrage question. I have it on my conscience that I offended you."

"Offended me when?"

"I've been haunted by the memory of you. I was rude and stupid. We were talking about the suffrage—and I rather scoffed."

"You weren't rude," she said.

"I didn't know you were so keen on this suffrage business."

"Nor I. You haven't had it on your mind all this time?"

"I have rather. I felt somehow I'd hurt you."

"You didn't. I—I hurt myself."

"I mean——"

"I behaved like an idiot, that's all. My nerves were in rags. I was worried. We're the hysterical animal, Mr. Capes. I got myself locked up to cool off. By a sort of instinct. As a dog eats grass. I'm right again now."

"Because your nerves were exposed, that was no excuse for my touching them. I ought to have seen——"

"It doesn't matter a rap—if you're not disposed to resent the—the way I behaved."

"I resent!"

"I was only sorry I'd been so stupid."

"Well, I take it we're straight again," said Capes with a note of relief, and assumed an easier position on the edge of her table. "But if you weren't keen on the suffrage business, why on earth did you go to prison?"

Ann Veronica reflected. "It was a phase," she said.

He smiled. "It's a new phase in the life history," he remarked. "Everybody seems to have it now. Everybody who's going to develop into a woman."

"There's Miss Garvice."

"She's coming on," said Capes. "And, you know, you're altering us all. I'm shaken. The campaign's a success." He met her questioning eye, and repeated, "Oh, it is a success. A man is so apt to—to take women a little too lightly. Unless they remind him now and then not to. *You did.*"

"Then I didn't waste my time in prison altogether?"

"It wasn't the prison impressed me. But I liked the things you said here. I felt suddenly I understood you—as an intelligent person. If you'll forgive my saying that, and implying what goes with it. There's something—puppyish in a man's usual attitude to women. That is what I've had on my conscience. I don't think we're altogether to blame if we don't take some of your lot seriously. Some of your sex, I mean. But we smirk a little, I'm afraid, habitually when we talk to you. We smirk, and we're a bit—furtive."

He paused, with his eye studying her gravely.

"You, anyhow, don't deserve it," he said.

Their colloquy was ended abruptly by the apparition of Miss Klegg at the further door. When she saw Ann Veronica she stood for a moment as if entranced, and then advanced with outstretched hands. "Véronique!" she cried with a rising intonation, though never before had she called Ann Veronica anything but Miss Stanley, and seized her and squeezed her and kissed her with profound emotion. "To think that you were going to do it—and never said a word! You are a little thin, but except for that you look—you look better than ever. Was it *very* horrible?"

I tried to get into the police court, but the crowd was ever so much too big, push as I would.

"I mean to go to prison directly the session is over," said Miss Klegg. "Wild horses—not if they have all the mounted police in London—shan't keep me out."

Capes lit things wonderfully for Ann Veronica all that afternoon, he was so friendly, so palpably interested in her, and glad to have her back with him. Tea in the laboratory was a sort of suffragette reception. Miss Garvice assumed a quality of neutrality, professed herself almost won over by Ann Veronica's example, and the Scotchman decided that if women had a distinctive sphere it was, at any rate, an enlarging sphere, and no one who believed in the doctrine of evolution could logically deny the vote to women "ultimately," however much they might be disposed to doubt the advisability of its immediate concession. It was a refusal of expediency, he said, and not an absolute refusal. The youth with his hair like Russell cleared his throat and said rather irrelevantly that he knew a man who knew Thomas Bayard Simmons, who had rioted in the Strangers' Gallery, and then Capes, finding them all distinctly pro-Ann Veronica, if not pro-feminist, ventured to be perverse, and started a vein of speculation upon the Scotchman's idea—that there were still hopes of women evolving into something higher.

He was unusually absurd and ready, and all the time it seemed to Ann Veronica as a delightful possibility, as a thing not indeed to be entertained seriously, but to be half furtively felt, that he was being so agreeable because she had come back again. She returned home through a world that was as roseate as it had been gray overnight.

But as she got out of the train at Morningside Park station she had a

shock. She saw, twenty yards down the platform, the shiny hat and broad back and inimitable swagger of Ramage. She dived at once behind the cover of the lamp room and affected serious trouble with her shoe lace until he was out of the station, and then she followed slowly and with extreme discretion until the bifurcation of the Avenue from the field way insured her escape. Ramage went up the Avenue, and she hurried along the path with a beating heart and a disagreeable sense of unsolved problems in her mind.

"That thing's going on," she told herself. "Everything goes on, confound it! One doesn't change anything one has set going by making good resolutions."

And then ahead of her she saw the radiant and welcoming figure of Manning. He came as an agreeable diversion from an insoluble perplexity. She smiled at the sight of him, and thereat his radiation increased.

"I missed the hour of your release," he said, "but I was at the Vindicator Restaurant. You did not see me, I know. I was among the common herd in the place below, but I took good care to see you."

"Of course you're converted?" she said.

"To the view that all those Splendid Women in the movement ought to have votes. Rather! Who could help it?"

He towered up over her and smiled down at her in his fatherly way.

"To the view that all women ought to have votes whether they like it or not."

He shook his head, and his eyes and the mouth under the black mustache wrinkled with his smile. And as he walked by her side they began a wrangle that was none the less pleasant to Ann Veronica because it served to banish a disagreeable preoccupation. It seemed to her in her restored geniality that she liked Manning extremely. The brightness Capes had diffused over the world glorified even his rival.

The steps by which Ann Veronica determined to engage herself to marry Manning were never very clear to her. A medley of motives warred in her, and it was certainly not one of the least of these that she knew herself to be passionately in love with Capes; at moments she had a giddy intimation that he was beginning to feel keenly interested in her. She realized more and more the quality of the brink upon which she stood—the dreadful readiness with which in certain moods she might plunge the unmitigated wrongness and recklessness of such a self-abandonment. "He must never know," she would whisper to herself; "he must never know. Or else—else it will be impossible that I can be his friend."

That simple statement of the case was by no means all that went on in Ann Veronica's mind. But it was the form of her ruling determination; it was the only form that she ever allowed to see daylight. What else was there lurked in shadows and deep places; if in some mood of reverie it came out into the light, it was presently overwhelmed and hustled back again into hiding. She would never look squarely at these dream forms that mocked the social order in which she lived, never admit she listened to the soft whisperings in her ear. But Manning seemed more and more clearly indicated as a refuge, as security. Certain simple purposes emerged from the disingenuous muddle of her feelings and desires. Seeing Capes from day to day made a bright eventfulness that hampered her in the course she had resolved to follow. She vanished from the laboratory for a week, a week of oddly interesting days.

When she renewed her attendance at the Imperial College the third finger of her left hand was adorned with a very fine old ring with dark blue sapphires that had once belonged to a great-aunt of Manning's.

That ring manifestly occupied her

thoughts a great deal. She kept pausing in her work and regarding it, and when Capes came round to her, she first put her hand in her lap and then rather awkwardly in front of him. But men are often blind to rings. He seemed to be.

In the afternoon she had considered certain doubts very carefully, and decided on a more emphatic course of action. "Are these ordinary sapphires?" she said. He bent to her hand, and she slipped off the ring and gave it to him to examine.

"Very good," he said. "Rather darker than most of them. But I'm generously ignorant of gems. Is it an old ring?" he asked, returning it.

"I believe it is. It's an engagement ring." She slipped it on her finger, and added in a voice she tried to make matter-of-fact: "It was given to me last week."

"Oh!" he said, in a colorless tone, and with his eyes on her face.

"Yes. Last week."

She glanced at him, and it was suddenly apparent for one instant of illumination that this ring upon her finger was the crowning blunder of her life. It was apparent, and then it faded into the quality of an inevitable necessity.

"Odd!" he remarked, rather surprisingly, after a little interval.

There was a brief pause, a crowded pause, between them.

She sat very still, and his eyes rested on that ornament for a moment, and then traveled slowly to her wrist and the soft lines of her forearm.

"I suppose I ought to congratulate you," he said. Their eyes met, and his expressed perplexity and curiosity. "The fact is—I don't know why—this takes me by surprise. Somehow I haven't connected the idea with you. You seemed complete—without that."

"Did I?" she said.

"I don't know why. But this is like—

like walking round a house that looks square and complete and finding an unexpected long wing running out behind."

She looked up at him and found he was watching her closely. For some seconds of voluminous thinking they looked at the ring between them, and neither spoke. Then Capes shifted his eyes to her microscope and the little trays of unmounted sections beside it. "How is that carmine working?" he asked, with a forced interest.

"Better," said Ann Veronica, with an unreal alacrity. "But it still misses the nucleolus."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SAPPHIRE RING.

For a time that ring set with sapphires seemed to be, after all, the satisfactory solution of Ann Veronica's difficulties. It was like pouring a strong acid over dulled metal. A tarnish of constraint that had recently spread over her intercourse with Capes vanished again. They embarked upon an open and declared friendship. They even talked about friendship. They went to the Zoological Gardens together one Saturday to see for themselves a point of morphological interest about the toucan's bill—that friendly and entertaining bird—and they spent the rest of the afternoon walking about and elaborating in general terms this theme and the superiority of intellectual fellowship to all merely passionate relationships. Upon this topic Capes was heavy and conscientious, but that seemed to her to be just exactly what he ought to be. He was also, had she known it, more than a little insincere.

"We are only in the dawn of the Age of Friendship," he said, "when interest, I suppose, will take the place of passions. Either you have had to love people or hate them—which is a sort of love, too, in its way—to get anything out of them. Now, more and more, we're going to be interested in them, to

be curious about them and—quite mildly—experimental with them." He seemed to be elaborating ideas as he talked. They watched the chimpanzees in the new apes' house, and admired the gentle humanity of their eyes—"so much more human than human beings"—and they watched the Agile Gibbon in the next apartment doing wonderful leaps and aerial somersaults.

"I wonder which of us enjoys that most," said Capes; "does he, or do we?"

"He seems to get a zest—"

"He does it and forgets it. We remember it. These joyful bounds just lace into the stuff of my memories and stay there forever. Living's just material."

"It's very good to be alive."

"It's better to know life than be life."

"One may do both," said Ann Veronica.

She was in a very uncritical state that afternoon. When he said, "Let's go and see the wart hog," she thought no one ever had had so quick a flow of good ideas as he; and when he explained that sugar and not buns was the talisman of popularity among the animals, she marveled at his practical omniscience.

Finally, at the exit into Regent's Park, they ran against Miss Klegg. It was the expression of Miss Klegg's face that put the idea into Ann Veronica's head of showing Manning at the College one day, an idea which she didn't for some reason or other carry out for a fortnight.

When at last she did so, the sapphire ring took on a new quality in the imagination of Capes. It ceased to be the symbol of liberty and a remote and quite abstracted person, and became suddenly and very disagreeably the token of a large and portentous body visible and tangible.

Manning appeared just at the end of the afternoon's work, and the biologist was going through some perplexities the Scotchman had created by a metaphysi-

cal treatment of the skulls of *Hyrax* and a young African elephant. He was clearing up these difficulties by tracing a partially obliterated suture the Scotchman had overlooked when the door from the passage opened, and Manning came into his universe.

Seen down the length of the laboratory, Manning looked a very handsome and shapely gentleman indeed, and, at the sight of his eager advance to his fiancée, Miss Klegg replaced one long-cherished romance about Ann Veronica by one more normal and simple. He carried a cane and a silk hat with a mourning band in one gray-gloved hand; his frock coat and trousers were admirable; his handsome face, his black mustache, his prominent brow conveyed an eager solicitude.

"I want," he said, with a white hand outstretched, "to take you out to tea."

"I've been clearing up," said Ann Veronica, brightly.

"All your dreadful, scientific things," he said, with a smile that Miss Klegg thought extraordinarily kindly.

"All my dreadful, scientific things," said Ann Veronica.

He stood back, smiling with an air of proprietorship, and looking about him at the businesslike equipment of the room. The low ceiling made him seem abnormally tall. Ann Veronica wiped a scalpel, put a card over a watch glass containing thin shreds of embryonic guinea-pig swimming in mauve stain, and dismantled her microscope.

"I wish I understood more of biology," said Manning.

"I'm ready," said Ann Veronica, closing her microscope box with a click, and looking for one brief instant up the laboratory. "We have no airs and graces here, and my hat hangs from a peg in the passage."

She led the way to the door, and Manning passed behind her and round her and opened the door for her. When Capes glanced up at them for a moment,

Manning seemed to be holding his arms all about her, and there was nothing but quiet acquiescence in her bearing.

After Capes had finished the Scotchman's troubles he went back into the preparation room. He sat down on the sill of the open window, folded his arms, and stared straight before him for a long time over the wilderness of tiles and chimney pots into a sky that was blue and empty. He was not addicted to monologue, and the only audible comment he permitted himself at first upon a universe that was evidently anything but satisfactory to him that afternoon, was one compact and entirely unassigned "Damn!"

The word must have had some gratifying quality, because he repeated it. Then he stood up and repeated it again. "The fool I have been!" he cried; and now speech was coming to him. He tried this sentence with expletives. "Ass!" he went on, still warming. "Muck-headed moral ass! I ought to have done anything. I ought to have done anything!"

"What's a man for?"

"Friendship!"

He doubled up his fist, and seemed to contemplate thrusting it through the window. He turned his back on that temptation. Then suddenly he seized a new preparation bottle that stood upon his table and contained the better part of a week's work—a displayed dissection of a snail, beautifully done—and hurled it across the room, to smash resoundingly upon the cemented floor under the bookcase; then, without either haste or pause, he swept his arm along a shelf of re-agents and sent them to mingle with the débris on the floor. They fell in a diapason of smashes. "H'm!" he said, regarding the wreckage with a calmer visage. "Silly!" he remarked after a pause. "One hardly knows—all the time."

He put his hands in his pockets, his mouth puckered to a whistle, and he

went to the door of the outer preparation room and stood there, looking, save for the faintest intensification of his natural ruddiness, the embodiment of blond serenity.

"Gellett," he called, "just come and clear up a mess, will you? I've smashed some things."

There was one serious flaw in Ann Veronica's arrangements for self-rehabilitation, and that was Ramage. He hung over her—he and his loan to her and his connection with her and that terrible evening—a vague, disconcerting possibility of annoyance and exposure. She could not see any relief from this anxiety except repayment, and repayment seemed impossible. The raising of twenty-five pounds was a task altogether beyond her powers. Her birthday was four months away, and that, at its extremist point, might give her another five pounds.

The thing rankled in her mind night and day. She would wake in the night to repeat her bitter cry: "Oh, why did I burn those notes?"

It added greatly to the annoyance of the situation that she had twice seen Ramage in the Avenue since her return to the shelter of her father's roof. He had saluted her with elaborate civility, his eyes distended with indecipherable meanings.

She felt she was bound in honor to tell the whole affair to Manning sooner or later. Indeed, it seemed inevitable that she must clear it up with his assistance, or not at all. And when Manning was not about the thing seemed simple enough. She would compose extremely lucid and honorable explanations. But when it came to broaching them, it proved to be much more difficult than she had supposed.

They went down the great staircase of the building, and, while she sought in her mind for a beginning, he broke into appreciation of her simple dress

and self-congratulations upon their engagement.

"It makes me feel," he said, "that nothing is impossible—to have you here beside me. I said, that day at Surbiton, 'There's many good things in life, but there's only one best, and that's the wild-haired girl who's pulling away at that oar. I will make her my Grail, and some day, perhaps, if God wills, she shall become my wife!'"

He looked very hard before him as he said this, and his voice was full of deep feeling.

"Grail!" said Ann Veronica; and then: "Oh, yes—of course! Anything but a holy one, I'm afraid."

"Altogether holy, Ann Veronica. Ah! But you can't imagine what you are to me and what you mean to me! I suppose there is something mystical and wonderful about all women."

"There is something mystical and wonderful about all human beings. I don't see that men need bank it with the women."

"A man does," said Manning; "a true man, anyhow. And for me there is only one treasure house. By Jove! When I think of it I want to leap and shout!"

"It would astonish that man with the barrow."

"It astonishes me that I don't," said Manning, in a tone of intense self-enjoyment.

"I think," began Ann Veronica, "that you don't realize——"

He disregarded her entirely. He waved an arm and spoke with a peculiar resonance. "I feel like a giant! I believe now I shall do great things. Gods! what it must be to pour out strong, splendid verse—mighty lines! Mighty lines! If I do, Ann Veronica, it will be you. It will be altogether you. I will dedicate my books to you. I will lay them at your feet."

He beamed upon her.

"I don't think you realize," Ann Ver-

onica began again, "that I am rather a defective human being."

"I don't want to," said Manning. "They say there are spots on the sun. Not for me. It warms me, and lights me, and fills my world with flowers. Why should I peep at it through smoked glass to see things that don't affect me?" He smiled his delight at his companion.

"I've got bad faults."

He shook his head slowly, smiling mysteriously.

"But perhaps I want to confess them."

"I grant you absolution."

"I don't want absolution. I want to make myself visible to you."

"I wish I could make you visible to yourself. I don't believe in the faults. They're just a joyous softening of the outline—more beautiful than perfection. Like the flaws of an old marble. If you talk of your faults, I shall talk of your splendors."

"I do want to tell you things, nevertheless."

"We'll have, thank God! ten myriad days to tell each other things. When I think of it—"

"But these are things I want to tell you now!"

"I made a little song of it. Let me say it to you. I've no name for it yet. Epithalamy might do.

"Like him who stood on Darien,

I view uncharted sea,

Ten thousand days, ten thousand nights

Before my Queen and me.

"And that only brings me up to about sixty-five!

"A glittering wilderness of time,

That to the sunset reaches;

No keel as yet its waves has plowed,

Or gritted on its beaches.

"And we will sail that splendor wide,

From day to day together,

From isle to isle of happiness,

Through years of God's own weather."

"Yes," said his prospective fellow sailor, "that's very pretty." She stopped

short, full of things unsaid. Pretty! Ten thousand days, ten thousand nights!

"You shall tell me your faults," said Manning. "If they matter to you, they matter."

"It isn't precisely faults," said Ann Veronica. "It's something that bothers me." Ten thousand! Put that way it seemed so different.

"Then assuredly!" said Manning.

She found a little difficulty in beginning. She was glad when he went on: "I want to be your city of refuge from every sort of bother. I want to stand between you and all the force and villainess of the world. I want to make you feel that here is a place where the crowd does not clamor nor ill-winds blow."

"That is all very well," said Ann Veronica, unheeded.

"That is my dream of you," said Manning, warming. "I want my life to be beaten gold just in order to make it a fitting setting for yours. There you will be, in an inner temple. I want to enrich it with hangings and gladden it with verses. I want to fill it with fine and precious things. And by degrees, perhaps, that maiden distrust of yours, that makes you shrink from my kisses, will vanish. Forgive me if a certain warmth creeps into my words! The Park is green and gray to-day, but I am glowing pink and gold. It is difficult to express these things."

They sat with tea and strawberries and cream before them at a little table in front of the pavilion in Regent's Park. Her confession was still unmade. Manning leaned forward on the table, talking discursively on the probable brilliance of their married life. Ann Veronica sat back in an attitude of inattention, her eyes on a distant game of cricket, her mind perplexed and busy. She was recalling the circumstances under which she had engaged herself to Manning, and trying to understand a

curious development of the quality of this relationship.

The particulars of her engagement were very clear in her memory. She had taken care he should have this momentous talk with her on a garden seat commanded by the windows of the house. They had been playing tennis, with his manifest intention looming over her.

"Let us sit down for a moment," he had said. He made his speech a little elaborately. She plucked at the knots of her racket and heard him to the end, then spoke in a restrained undertone.

"You ask me to be engaged to you, Mr. Manning," she began.

"I want to lay all my life at your feet."

"Mr. Manning, I do not think I love you. I want to be very plain with you. I have nothing, nothing that can possibly be passion for you. I am sure. Nothing at all."

He was silent for some moments.

"Perhaps that is only sleeping," he said. "How can you know?"

"I think—perhaps I am rather a cold-blooded person."

She stopped. He remained listening attentively.

"You have been very kind to me," she said.

"I would give my life for you."

Her heart had warmed toward him. It had seemed to her that life might be very good indeed with his kindliness and sacrifice about her. She thought of him as always courteous and helpful, as realizing, indeed, his ideal of protection and service, as chivalrously leaving her free to live her own life, rejoicing with an infinite generosity in every detail of her irresponsible being. She twanged the catgut under her fingers.

"It seems so unfair," she said, "to take all you offer me and give so little in return."

"It is all the world to me. And we are not traders looking at equivalents."

"You know, Mr. Manning, I do not really want to marry."

"No."

"It seems so—so unworthy"—she picked among her phrases—"of the noble love you give—"

She stopped, through the difficulty she found in expressing herself.

"But I am judge of that," said Manning.

"Would you wait for me?"

Manning was silent for a space. "As my lady wills."

"Would you let me go on studying for a time?"

"If you order patience."

"I think, Mr. Manning—I do not know. It is so difficult. When I think of the love you give me— One ought to give you back love."

"You like me?"

"Yes. And I am grateful to you."

Manning tapped with his racket on the turf through some moments of silence. "You are the most perfect, the most glorious of created things—tender, frank, intellectual, brave, beautiful. I am your servitor. I am ready to wait for you, to wait your pleasure, to give all my life to winning it. Let me only wear your livery. Give me but leave to try. You want to think for a time, to be free for a time. That is so like you, Diana—Pallas Athene!—Pallas Athene is better. You are all the slender goddesses. I understand. Let me engage myself. That is all I ask."

She looked at him; his face, downcast and in profile, was handsome and strong. Her gratitude swelled within her.

"You are too good for me," she said in a low voice.

"Then you—you will?"

A long pause.

"It isn't fair—"

"But will you?"

"Yes."

For some seconds he had remained quite still.

"If I sit here," he said, standing up before her abruptly, "I shall have to shout. Let us walk about. Tum, tum, turray, tum, tum, tum, te-tum—that thing of Mendelssohn's! If making one human being absolutely happy is any satisfaction to you——"

He held out his hands, and she also stood up.

He drew her close up to him with a strong, steady pull. Then suddenly, in front of all those windows, he folded her in his arms and pressed her to him, and kissed her unresisting face.

"Don't!" cried Ann Veronica, struggling faintly, and he released her.

"Forgive me," he said. "But I am at singing pitch."

She had a moment of sheer panic at the thing she had done. "Mr. Manning," she said, "for a time—will you tell no one? Will you keep this—our secret? I'm doubtful—— Will you please not even tell my aunt?"

"As you will," he said. "But if my manner tells! I cannot help it if that shows. You only mean a secret—for a little time?"

"Just for a little time," she said; "yes!"

But the ring, and her aunt's triumphant eye, and a note of approval in her father's manner, and a novel disposition in him to praise Manning in a just, impartial voice had soon placed very definite qualifications upon that covenanted secrecy.

At first the quality of her relationship to Manning seemed moving and beautiful to Ann Veronica. She admired and rather pitied him, and she was unfeignedly grateful to him. She even thought that perhaps she might come to love him, in spite of that faint indefinable flavor of absurdity that pervaded his courtly bearing. She would never love him as she loved Capes, of course, but there are grades and qualities of love. For Manning it would be

a more temperate love altogether. Much more temperate; the discreet and joyless love of a virtuous, reluctant, condescending wife. She had been quite convinced that an engagement with him and at last a marriage had exactly that quality of compromise which distinguishes the ways of the wise. It would be the wrapped world almost at its best. She saw herself building up a life upon that—a life restrained, kindly, beautiful, a little pathetic and altogether dignified; a life of great disciplines and suppressions and extensive reserves.

But the Ramage affair needed clearing up, of course; it was a flaw upon that project. She had to explain about and pay off that forty pounds.

Then, quite insensibly, her queenliness had declined. She was never able to trace the changes her attitude had undergone, from the time when she believed herself to be the pampered queen of fortune, the crown of a good man's love—and secretly, but nobly, worshiping some one else—to the time when she realized she was in fact just a *mannequin* for her lover's imagination, and that he cared no more for the realities of her being, for the things she felt and desired, for the passions and dreams that might move her, than a child cares for the sawdust in its doll. She was the actress his whim had chosen to play a passive part.

It was one of the most educational disillusionments in Ann Veronica's career.

But did many women get anything better?

This afternoon, when she was urgent to explain her hampering and tainting complication with Ramage, the realization of this alien quality in her relationship with Manning became acute. Hitherto it had been qualified by her conception of all life as a compromise, by her new effort to be unexacting of life. But she perceived that to tell Manning of her Ramage adventures, as they

had happened, would be like tarring figures upon a water color. They were in different key, they had a different timbre. How could she tell him what indeed already began to puzzle herself, why she had borrowed that money at all? The plain fact was that she had grabbed a bait. She had grabbed! She became less and less attentive to his meditative, self-complacent fragments of talk as she told herself this. Her secret thoughts made some hasty, half-hearted excursions into the possibility of telling the thing in romantic tones—Ramage was as a black villain, she as a white, fantastically white, maiden. She doubted if Manning would even listen to that. He would refuse to listen and absolve her unshriven.

Then it came to her with a shock, as an extraordinary oversight, that she could never tell Manning about Ramage—never.

She dismissed the idea of doing so. But that still left the forty pounds!

Her mind went on generalizing. So it would always be between herself and Manning. She saw her life before her robbed of all generous illusions, the wrapped life unwrapped forever, vistas of dull responses, crises of make-believe, years of exacting mutual disregard in a misty garden of fine sentiments.

But did any woman get anything better from a man? Perhaps every woman conceals herself from a man perforce!

She thought of Capes. She could not help thinking of Capes. Surely Capes was different. Capes looked at one and not over one, spoke to one, treated one as a visible, concrete fact. Capes saw her, felt for her, cared for her greatly, even if he did not love her. Anyhow, he did not sentimentalize her. And she had been doubting since that walk in the Zoölogical Gardens whether, indeed, he did simply care for her. Little things, almost impalpable, had happened to

justify that doubt; something in his manner had belied his words. Did he not look for her in the morning when she entered—come very quickly to her? She thought of him as she had last seen him looking down the length of the laboratory to see her go. Why had he glanced up—quite in that way?

The thought of Capes flooded her being like long-veiled sunlight breaking again through clouds. It came to her like a dear thing rediscovered, that she loved Capes. It came to her that to marry any one but Capes was impossible. If she could not marry him, she would not marry any one. She would end this sham with Manning. It ought never to have begun. It was cheating, pitiful cheating. And then if some day Capes wanted her—saw fit to alter his views upon friendship.

Dim possibilities that she would not seem to look at even to herself gesticulated in the twilight background of her mind.

She leaped suddenly at a desperate resolution, and in one moment had made it into a new self. She flung aside every plan she had in life, every discretion. Of course, why not? She would be honest, anyhow!

She turned her eyes to Manning.

He was sitting back from the table now, with one arm over the back of his green chair and the other resting on the little table. He was smiling under his heavy mustache, and his head was a little on one side as he looked at her.

"And what was that dreadful confession you had to make?" he was saying. His quiet, kindly smile implied his serene disbelief in any confessible thing. Ann Veronica pushed aside a teacup and the vestiges of her strawberries and cream, and put her elbows before her on the table.

"Mr. Manning," she said, "I have a confession to make."

"I wish you would use my Christian name," he said.

She attended to that, and then dismissed it as unimportant.

Something in her voice and manner conveyed an effect of unwonted gravity to him. For the first time he seemed to wonder what it might be that she had to confess. His smile faded.

"I don't think our engagement can go on," she plunged, and felt exactly that loss of breath that comes with a dive into icy water.

"But, how," he said, sitting up astonished beyond measure, "not go on?"

"I have been thinking while you have been talking. You see—I didn't understand." She stared hard at her finger nails. "It is hard to express one's self, but I do want to be honest with you. When I promised to marry you I thought I could; I thought it was a possible arrangement. I did think it could be done. I admired your chivalry. I was grateful."

She paused.

"Go on," he said.

She moved her elbow nearer to him and spoke in a still lower tone. "I told you I did not love you."

"I know," said Manning, nodding gravely. "It was fine and brave of you."

"But there is something more."

She paused again.

"I—I am sorry—— I didn't explain. These things are difficult. It wasn't clear to me that I had to explain. I love some one else."

They remained looking at each other for three or four seconds. Then Manning flopped back in his chair and dropped his chin like a man shot. There was a long silence between them.

"My God!" he said at last, with tremendous feeling, and then again, "My God!"

Now that this thing was said her mind was clear and calm. She heard this standard expression of a strong soul wrung with a critical coldness that astonished herself. She realized dimly that there was no personal thing behind

his cry, that countless myriads of Mannings had "My God!"-ed with an equal gusto at situations as flatly apprehended. This mitigated her remorse enormously. He rested his brow on his hand and conveyed magnificent tragedy by his pose.

"But why," he said in the gasping voice of one subduing an agony, and looked at her from under a pain-wrinkled brow, "why did you not tell me this before?"

"I didn't know—— I thought I might be able to control myself."

"And you can't?"

"I don't think I ought to control myself."

"And I have been dreaming and thinking——"

"I am frightfully sorry."

"But—this bolt from the blue! My God! Ann Veronica, you don't understand. This—this shatters a world!"

She tried to feel sorry, but her sense of his immense egotism was strong and clear.

He went on with intense urgency.

"Why did you ever let me love you? Why did you ever let me peep through the gates of paradise? Oh! my God! I don't begin to feel and realize this yet. It seems to me just talk; it seems to me like the fancy of a dream. Tell me I haven't heard. This is a joke of yours." He made his voice very low and full, and looked closely into her face.

She twisted her fingers tightly. "It isn't a joke," she said. "I feel shabby and disgraced. I ought never to have thought of it. Of you, I mean."

He fell back in his chair with an expression of tremendous desolation. "My God!" he said again.

They became aware of the waitress standing over them with book and pencil ready for their bill. "Never mind the bill," said Manning tragically, standing up and thrusting a four-shilling piece into her hand, and turning a broad back on her astonishment. "Let

us walk across the Park at least," he said to Ann Veronica. "Just at present my mind simply won't take hold of this at all. I tell you—never mind the bill. Keep it! Keep it!"

They walked a long way that afternoon. They crossed the Park to the westward, and then turned back and walked round the circle about the Royal Botanical Gardens and then southwardly toward Waterloo. They trudged and talked, and Manning struggled, as he said, to "get the hang of it all."

It was a long, meandering talk, stupid, shameful, and unavoidable. Ann Veronica was apologetic to the bottom of her soul. At the same time she was wildly exultant at the resolution she had taken, the end she had made to her blunder. She had only to get through this, to solace Manning as much as she could, to put such clumsy plasterings on his wounds as were possible, and then, anyhow, she would be free—free to put her fate to the test. She made a few protests, a few excuses for her action in accepting him, a few lame explanations, but he did not heed them or care for them. Then she realized that it was her business to let Manning talk and impose his own interpretations upon the situation so far as he was concerned. She did her best to do this. But about his unknown rival he was acutely curious.

He made her tell him the core of the difficulty.

"I cannot say who he is," said Ann Veronica, "but he is a married man. No! I do not even know that he cares for me. It is no good going into that. Only I just want him. I just want him, and no one else will do. It is no good arguing about a thing like that."

"But you thought you could forget him."

"I suppose I must have thought so. I didn't understand. Now I do."

"By God!" said Manning, making the

most of the word. "I suppose it's fate. Fate! You are so frank, so splendid!"

"I'm taking this calmly now," he said, almost as if he apologized, "because I'm a little stunned."

Then he asked, "Tell me! has this man, has he *dared* to make love to you?"

Ann Veronica had a vicious moment. "I wish he had," she said.

"But—"

The long inconsecutive conversation by that time was getting on her nerves. "When one wants a thing more than anything else in the world," she said with outrageous frankness, "one naturally wishes one had it."

She shocked him by that. She shattered the edifice he was building up of himself as a devoted lover, waiting only his chance to win her from a hopeless and consuming passion.

"Mr. Manning," she said, "I warned you not to idealize me. Men ought not to idealize any woman. We aren't worth it. We've done nothing to deserve it. And it hampers us. You don't know the thoughts we have; the things we can do and say. You are a sisterless man; you have never heard the ordinary talk that goes on at a girls' boarding school."

"Oh! but you *are* splendid and open and fearless! As if I couldn't allow! What are all these little things? Nothing! Nothing! You can't sully yourself. You can't! I tell you frankly you may break off your engagement to me—I shall hold myself still engaged to you, yours just the same. As for this infatuation—it's like some obsession, some magic thing laid upon you. It's not you—not a bit. It's a thing that's happened to you. It is like some accident. I don't care. In a sense I don't care. It makes no difference. All the same, I wish I had that fellow by the throat! Just the virile, unregenerate man in me wishes that."

"I suppose I should let go if I had."

"You know," he went on, "this doesn't seem to me to end anything. I'm rather

a persistent person. I'm the sort of dog, if you turn it out of the room it lies down on the mat at the door. I'm not a lovesick boy. I'm a man, and I know what I mean. It's a tremendous blow, of course—but it doesn't kill me. And the situation it makes—the situation!"

Thus Manning, egotistical, inconsecutive, unreal. And Ann Veronica walked beside him, trying in vain to soften her heart to him by the thought of how she had ill-used him, and all the time, as her feet and mind grew weary together, rejoicing more and more that at the cost of this one interminable walk she escaped the prospect of—what was it?—"Ten thousand days, ten thousands and nights" in his company. Whatever happened she need never return to that possibility.

"For me," Manning went on, "this isn't final. In a sense it alters nothing. I shall still wear your favor—even if it is a stolen and forbidden favor—in my casque. I shall still believe in you. Trust you."

He repeated several times that he would trust her, though it remained obscure just exactly where the trust came in.

"Look here," he cried out of a silence, with a sudden flash of understanding, "did you mean to throw me over when you came out with me this afternoon?"

Ann Veronica hesitated, and with a startled mind realized the truth. "No," she answered, reluctantly.

"Very well," said Manning. "Then I don't take this as final. That's all. I've bored you or something. You think you love this other man! No doubt you do love him. Before you have lived——"

He became darkly prophetic. He thrust out a rhetorical hand.

"I will *make* you love me! Until he has faded—faded into a memory."

He saw her into the train at Waterloo, and stood, a tall, grave figure, with

hat upraised, as the carriage moved forward slowly and hid him. Ann Veronica sat back with a sigh of relief. Manning might go on now idealizing her as much as he liked. She was no longer a confederate in that. He might go on as the devoted lover until he tired. She had done forever with the Age of Chivalry, and her own base adaptations of its traditions to the compromising life. She was honest again.

But when she turned her thoughts to Morningside Park she perceived the tangled skein of life was now to be further complicated by his romantic importunity.

CHAPTER XV.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE PENITENT.

Spring had held back that year until the dawn of May, and then spring and summer came with a rush together. Two days after this conversation between Manning and Ann Veronica, Capes came into the laboratory at lunch time and found her alone there, standing by the open window, and not even pretending to be doing anything. He came in with his hands in his trousers pockets and a general air of depression in his bearing. He was engaged in detesting Manning and himself in almost equal measure. His face brightened at the sight of her, and he came toward her.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Ann Veronica, and stared over her shoulder out of the window.

"So am I. Lassitude?"

"I suppose so."

"I can't work."

"Nor I," said Ann Veronica.

Pause.

"It's the spring," he said. "It's the warming up of the year, the coming of the light mornings, the way in which everything begins to run about and begin new things. Work becomes distasteful; one thinks of holidays. This

year—I've got it badly. I want to get away. I've never wanted to get away so much."

"Where do you go?"

"Oh! Alps."

"Climbing?"

"Yes."

"That's rather a fine sort of holiday!"

He made no answer for three or four seconds.

"Yes," he said, "I want to get away. I feel at moments as though I could bolt for it. Silly, isn't it? Undisciplined."

He went to the window and fidgeted with the blind, looking out to where the tree tops of Regent's Park showed distantly over the houses. He turned round toward her and found her looking at him and standing very still.

"It's the stir of spring," he said.

"I believe it is."

She glanced out of the window, and the distant trees were a froth of hard spring green and almond blossom. She formed a wild resolution, and, lest she should waver from it, she set about at once to realize it.

"I've broken off my engagement," she said, in a matter-of-fact tone, and found her heart thumping in her neck. He moved slightly, and she went on, with a slight catching of her breath: "It's a bother and disturbance, but you see—" She had to go through with it now, because she could think of nothing but her preconceived words. Her voice was weak and flat—"I've fallen in love."

He never helped her by a sound.

"I—I didn't love the man I was engaged to," she said.

She met his eyes for a moment, and could not interpret their expression. They struck her as cold and indifferent.

Her heart failed her and her resolution became water. She remained standing stiffly, unable even to move. She could not look at him through an interval that seemed to her a vast gulf

of time. But she felt his lax figure become rigid.

At last his voice came to release her tension.

"I thought you weren't keeping up to the mark. You— It's jolly of you to confide in me. Still—" Then, with incredible and obviously deliberate stupidity, and a voice as flat as her own, he asked, "Who is the man?"

Her spirit raged within her at the dumbness, the paralysis that had fallen upon her. Grace, confidence, the power of movement even, seemed gone from her. A fever of shame ran through her being. Horrible doubts assailed her. She sat down awkwardly and helplessly on one of the little stools by her table and covered her face with her hands.

"Can't you *see* how things are?" she said.

Before Capes could answer her in any way the door at the end of the laboratory opened noisily and Miss Klegg appeared. She went to her own table and sat down. At the sound of the door Ann Veronica uncovered a tearless face, and with one swift movement assumed a conversational attitude. Things hung for a moment in an awkward silence.

"You see," said Ann Veronica, staring before her at the window sash, "that's the form my question takes at the present time."

Capes had not quite the same power of recovery. He stood with his hands in his pockets looking at Miss Klegg's back. His face was white. "It's—it's a difficult question." He appeared to be paralyzed by abstruse acoustic calculations. Then, very awkwardly, he took a stool and placed it at the end of Ann Veronica's table, and sat down. He glanced at Miss Klegg again, and spoke quickly and furtively, with eager eyes on Ann Veronica's face.

"I had a faint idea once that things were as you say they are, but the affair of the ring—of the unexpected ring—puzzled me. Wish *she*"—he indicated

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Miss Klegg's back with a nod—"was at the bottom of the sea. I would like to talk to you about this—soon. If you don't think it would be a social outrage, perhaps I might walk with you to your railway station."

"I will wait," said Ann Veronica, still not looking at him, "and we will go into Regent's Park. No—you shall come with me to Waterloo."

"Right!" he said, and hesitated, and then got up and went into the preparation room.

For a time they walked in silence through the back streets that lead southward from the college. Capes bore a face of infinite perplexity.

"The thing I feel most disposed to say, Miss Stanley," he began at last, "is that this is very sudden."

"It's been coming on since first I came into the laboratory."

"What do you want?" he asked, bluntly.

"You!" said Ann Veronica.

The sense of publicity, of people coming and going about them, kept them both unemotional. And neither had any of that theatricality which demands gestures and facial expression.

"I suppose you know I like you tremendously?" he pursued.

"You told me that in the Zoölogical Gardens."

She found her muscles a-tremble. But there was nothing in her bearing that a passer-by would have noted, to tell of the excitement that possessed her.

"I"—he seemed to have a difficulty with the word—"I love you. I've told you that practically already. But I can give it its name now. You needn't be in any doubt about it. I tell you that because it puts us on a footing——"

They went on for a time without another word.

"But don't you know about me?" he said at last.

"Something. Not much."

"I'm a married man. And my wife won't live with me for reasons that I think most women would consider sound. Or I should have made love to you long ago."

There came a silence again.

"I don't care," said Ann Veronica.

"But if you knew anything of that sort——"

"I did. It doesn't matter."

"Why did you tell me? I thought—I thought we were going to be friends."

He was suddenly resentful. He seemed to charge her with the ruin of their situation. "Why on earth did you tell me?" he cried.

"I couldn't help it. It was an impulse. I *had* to."

"But it changes things. I thought you understood."

"I had to," she repeated. "I was sick of the make-believe. I don't care! I'm glad I did. I'm glad I did."

"Look here!" said Capes. "What on earth do you want? What do you think we can do? Don't you know what men are, and what life is? To come to me and talk to me like this!"

"I know—something, anyhow. But I don't care; I haven't a spark of shame. I don't see any good in life if it hasn't got you in it. I wanted you to know. And now you know. And the fences are down for good. You can't look me in the eyes and say you don't care for me."

"I've told you," he said.

"Very well," said Ann Veronica, with an air of concluding the discussion.

They walked side by side for a time.

"In that laboratory one gets to disregard these passions," began Capes. "Men are curious animals, with a trick of falling in love readily with girls about your age. One has to train one's self not to. I've accustomed myself to think of you—as if you were like every other girl who works at the schools—as something quite outside these possibilities. If only out of loyalty to coeducation one

has to do that. Apart from everything else, this meeting of ours is a breach of a good rule."

"Rules are for every day," said Ann Veronica. "This is not every day. This is something above all rules."

"For you."

"Not for you?"

"No. No; I'm going to stick to the rules. It's odd, but nothing but *cliché* seems to meet this case. You've placed me in a very exceptional position, Miss Stanley." The note of his own voice exasperated him. "Oh, damn!" he said.

She made no answer, and for a time he debated some problems with himself.

"No!" he said aloud at last.

"The plain common sense of the case," he said, "is that we can't possibly be lovers in the ordinary sense. That, I think, is manifest. You know, I've done no work at all this afternoon. I've been smoking cigarettes in the preparation room and thinking this out. We can't be lovers in the ordinary sense, but we can be great and intimate friends."

"We are," said Ann Veronica.

"You've interested me enormously."

He paused with a sense of ineptitude. "I want to be your friend," he said. "I said that at the Zoo, and I mean it. Let us be friends—as near and close as friends can be."

Ann Veronica gave him a pallid profile.

"What is the good of pretending?" she said.

"We don't pretend."

"We do. Love is one thing and friendship quite another. Because I'm younger than you—I've got imagination. I know what I am talking about. Mr. Capes, do you think—do you think I don't know the meaning of love?"

Capes made no answer for a time.

"My mind is full of confused stuff," he said at length. "I've been thinking—all the afternoon. Oh, and weeks and months of thought and feeling there are bottled up, too. I feel a mixture of

beast and uncle. I feel like a fraudulent trustee. Every rule is against me. Why did I let you begin this? I might have told——"

"I don't see that you could help——"

"I might have helped——"

"You couldn't."

"I ought to have—all the same. I wonder," he said, and went off at a tangent. "You know about my scandalous past?"

"Very little. It doesn't seem to matter. Does it?"

"I think it does. Profoundly."

"How?"

"It prevents our marrying. It forbids—all sorts of things."

"It can't prevent our loving."

"I'm afraid it can't. But, by Jove! it's going to make our loving a fiercely abstract thing."

"You are separated from your wife?"

"Yes, but do you know how?"

"Not exactly."

"Why on earth? A man ought to be labeled. You see, I'm separated from my wife. But she doesn't and won't divorce me. You don't understand the fix I am in. And you don't know what led to our separation. And, in fact, all round the problem you don't know and I don't see how I could possibly have told you before. I wanted to, that day in the Zoo. But I trusted to that ring of yours."

"Poor old ring!" said Ann Veronica.

"I ought never have gone to the Zoo, I suppose. I asked you to go. But a man is a mixed creature. I wanted the time with you. I wanted it badly."

"Tell me about yourself," said Ann Veronica.

"To begin with, I was—I was in the divorce court. I was—I was a co-respondent. You understand that term?"

Ann Veronica smiled faintly. "A modern girl does understand these terms. She reads novels—and history—and all sorts of things. Did you really doubt if I knew?"

"No. But I don't suppose you can understand."

"I don't see why I shouldn't."

"To know things by name is one thing; to know them by seeing them and feeling them and being them quite another. That is where life takes advantage of youth. You don't understand."

"Perhaps I don't."

"You don't. That's the difficulty. If I told you the facts, I expect, since you are in love with me, you'd explain the whole business as being very fine and honorable for me—the Higher Morality, or something of that sort. It wasn't."

"I don't deal very much," said Ann Veronica, "in the Higher Morality, or the Higher Truth, or any of those things."

"Perhaps you don't. But a human being who is young and clean, as you are, is apt to ennoble—or explain away."

"I've had a biological training. I'm a hard young woman."

"Nice, clean hardness, anyhow. I think you are hard. There's something—something *adult* about you. I'm talking to you now as though you had all the wisdom and charity in the world. I'm going to tell you things plainly. Plainly. It's best. And then you can go home and think things over before we talk again. I want you to be clear what you're really and truly up to, anyhow."

"I don't mind knowing," said Ann Veronica.

"It's precious unromantic."

"Well, tell me."

"I married pretty young," said Capes. "I've got—I have to tell you this to make myself clear—a streak of ardent animal in my composition. I married—I married a woman whom I still think one of the most beautiful persons in the world. She is a year or so older than I am, and she is, well, of a very serene and proud and dignified temperament. If you met her you would, I am certain,

think her as fine as I do. She has never done a really ignoble thing that I know of—never. I met her when we were both very young, as young as you are. I loved her and made love to her, and I don't think she quite loved me back in the same way."

He paused for a time. Ann Veronica said nothing.

"These are the sort of things that aren't supposed to happen. They leave them out of novels—these incompatibilities. Young people ignore them until they find themselves up against them. My wife doesn't understand, doesn't understand now. She despises me, I suppose. We married, and for a time we were happy. She was fine and tender. I worshiped her and subdued myself."

He left off abruptly. "Do you understand what I am talking about?" It's no good if you don't."

"I think so," said Ann Veronica, and colored. "In fact, yes, I do."

"Do you think of these things—these matters—as belonging to our Higher Nature or our Lower?"

"I don't deal in Higher Things, I tell you," said Ann Veronica, "or Lower, for the matter of that. I don't classify." She hesitated. "Flesh and flowers are all alike to me."

"That's the comfort of you. Well, after a time there came a fever in my blood. Don't think it was anything better than fever—or a bit beautiful. It wasn't. Quite soon after we were married—it was just within a year—I formed a friendship with the wife of a friend, a woman eight years older than myself. It wasn't anything splendid, you know. It was just a shabby, stupid, furtive business that began between us. Like stealing. We dressed it in a little music. I want you to understand clearly that I was indebted to the man in many small ways. I was mean to him. It was the gratification of an immense necessity. We were two people with a

craving. We felt like thieves. We *were* thieves. We *liked* each other well enough. Well, my friend found us out, and would give no quarter. He divorced her. How do you like the story?"

"Go on," said Ann Veronica, a little hoarsely; "tell me all of it."

"My wife was astounded—wounded beyond measure. She thought me—filthy. All her pride raged at me. One particularly humiliating thing came out—humiliating for me. There was a second co-respondent. I hadn't heard of him before the trial. I don't know why that should be so acutely humiliating. There's no logic in these things. It was."

"Poor you!" said Ann Veronica.

"My wife refused absolutely to have anything more to do with me. She could hardly speak to me; she insisted relentlessly upon a separation. She had money of her own—much more than I have—and there was no need to squabble about that. She has given herself up to social work."

"Well——"

"That's all. Practically all. And yet— Wait a little, you'd better have every bit of it. One doesn't go about with these passions allayed simply because they have made wreckage and a scandal. There one is! The same stuff still! One has a craving in one's blood, a craving roused, cut off from its redeeming and guiding emotional side. A man has more freedom to do evil than a woman. Irregularly, in a quite inglorious and unromantic way, you know, I am a vicious man. That's—that's my private life. Until the last few months. It isn't what I have been but what I am. I haven't taken much account of it until now. My honor has been in my scientific work and public discussion and the things I write. Lots of us are like that. But, you see, I'm smirched. For the sort of love-making you think about. I've muddled all this business. I've had my time and lost my chances. I'm dam-

aged goods. And you're as clean as fire. You come with those clear eyes of yours, as valiant as an angel."

He stopped abruptly.

"Well?" she said.

"That's all."

"It's so strange to think of you—troubled by such things. I didn't think—I don't know what I thought. Suddenly all this makes you human. Makes you real."

"But don't you see how I must stand to you? Don't you see how it bars us from being lovers? You can't—at first. You must think it over. It's all outside the world of your experience."

"I don't think it makes a rap of difference, except for one thing. I love you more. I've wanted you—always. I didn't dream, not even in my wildest dreaming, that—you might have any need of me."

He made a little noise in his throat as if something had cried out within him, and for a time they were both too full for speech.

They were going up the slope into Waterloo station.

"You go home and think of all this," he said, "and talk about it to-morrow. Don't, don't say anything now, not anything. As for loving you, I do. I do—with all my heart. It's no good hiding it any more. I could never have talked to you like this, forgetting everything that parts us, forgetting even your age, if I did not love you utterly. If I were a clean, free man— We'll have to talk of all these things. Thank goodness there's plenty of opportunity! And we two can talk. Anyhow, now you've begun it, there's nothing to keep us in all this from being the best friends in the world. And talking of every conceivable thing. Is there?"

"Nothing," said Ann Veronica with a radiant face.

"Before this there was a sort of restraint—a make-believe. It's gone."

"It's gone."

"Friendship and love being separate things. And that confounded engagement!"

"Gone!"

They came upon a platform and stood before her compartment.

He took her hand and looked into her eyes and spoke, divided against himself, in a voice that was forced and insincere.

"I shall be very glad to have you for a friend," he said, "a loving friend. I had never dreamed of such a friend as you."

She smiled, sure of herself beyond any pretending, into his troubled eyes. Hadn't they settled that already?

"I want you as a friend," he persisted, almost as if he disputed something.

The next morning she waited in the laboratory at the lunch hour in the reasonable certainty that he would come to her.

"Well, you have thought it over?" he said, sitting down beside her.

"I've been thinking of you all night," she answered.

"Well?"

"I don't care a rap for all these things."

He said nothing for a space.

"I don't see there's any getting away from the fact that you and I love each other," he said, slowly. "So far you've got me and I you. You've got me. I'm like a creature just wakened up. My eyes are open to you. I keep on thinking of you. I keep on thinking of little details and aspects of your voice, your eyes, the way you walk, the way your hair goes back from the side of your forehead. I believe I have always been in love with you. Always. Before ever I knew you."

She sat motionless, with her hand tightening over the edge of the table, and he, too, said no more. She began to tremble violently.

He stood up abruptly and went to the window.

"We have," he said, "to be the utmost friends."

She stood up and held her arms toward him. "I want you to kiss me," she said.

He gripped the window sill behind him.

"If I do——" he said. "No! I want to do without that. I want to do without that for a time. I want to give you time to think. I am a man—of a sort of experience. You are a girl with very little. Just sit down on that stool again and let's talk of this in cold blood. People of your sort—— I don't want the instincts to—rush our situation. Are you sure what it is you want of me?"

"I want you. I want you to be my lover. I want to give myself to you. I want to be whatever I can to you." She paused for a moment. "Is that plain?" she asked.

"If I didn't love you better than myself," said Capes, "I wouldn't fence like this with you. I am convinced you haven't thought this out," he went on. "You do not know what such a relation means. We are in love. Our heads swim with the thought of being together. But what can we do? Here am I, fixed to respectability and this laboratory; you're living at home. It means—just furtive meetings."

"I don't care how we meet," she said.

"It will spoil your life."

"It will make it. I want you. I am clear I want you. You are different from all the world for me. You can think all round me. You are the one person I can understand and feel—feel right with. I don't idealize you. Don't imagine that. It isn't because you're good, but because I may be rotten bad; and there's something—something living and understanding in you. Something that is born anew each time we meet, and pines when we are separated. You see, I'm selfish. I'm rather scornful. I think too much about myself. You're

the only person I've really given good, straight, unselfish thought to. I'm making a mess of my life—unless you come in and take it. I am. In you—if you can love me—there is salvation. Salvation. I know what I am doing better than you do. Think—think of that engagement!"

Their talk had come to eloquent silences that contradicted all he had to say.

She stood up before him, smiling faintly.

"I think we've exhausted this discussion," she said.

"I think we have," he answered, gravely, and took her in his arms, and smoothed her hair from her forehead, and very tenderly kissed her lips.

They spent the next Sunday in Richmond Park, and mingled the happy sensation of being together uninterruptedly through the long sunshine of a summer's day with the ample discussion of their position. "This has all the clean freshness of spring and youth," said Capes; "it is love with the down on; it is like the glitter of dew in the sunlight to be lovers such as we are, with no more than one warm kiss between us. I love everything to-day, and all of you, but I love this, this—this innocence upon us most of all.

"You can't imagine," he said, "what a beastly thing a furtive love affair can be.

"This isn't furtive," said Ann Veronica.

"Not a bit of it. And we won't make it so. We mustn't make it so."

They loitered under trees, they sat on mossy banks, they gossiped on friendly benches, they came back to lunch at the "Star and Garter," and talked their afternoon away in the garden that looks out upon the crescent of the river. They had a universe to talk about—two universes.

"What are we going to do?" said

Capes, with his eyes on the broad distances beyond the ribbon of the river.

"I will do whatever you want," said Ann Veronica.

"My first love was all blundering," said Capes.

He thought for a moment, and went on: "Love is something that has to be taken care of. One has to be so careful. It's a beautiful plant, but a tender one. I didn't know. I've a dread of love dropping its petals, becoming mean and ugly. How can I tell you all I feel? I love you beyond measure. And I'm afraid. I'm anxious, joyfully anxious, like a man when he has found a treasure."

"You know," said Ann Veronica. "I just came to you and put myself in your hands."

"That's why, in a way, I'm prudish. I've dreads. I don't want to tear at you with hot, rough hands."

"As you will, dear lover. But for me it doesn't matter. Nothing is wrong that you do. Nothing. I am quite clear about this. I know exactly what I am doing. I give myself to you."

"God send you may never repent it!" cried Capes.

She put her hand to his to be squeezed.

"You see," he said, "it is doubtful if we can ever marry. Very doubtful. I have been thinking. I will go to my wife again. I will do my utmost. But for a long time, anyhow, we lovers have to be as if we were no more than friends."

He paused. She answered slowly.

"That is as you will," she said.

"Why should it matter?" he said.

And then, as she answered nothing, "Seeing that we are lovers."

It was rather less than a week after that walk that Capes came and sat down beside Ann Veronica for their customary talk in the lunch hour. He took a handful of almonds and raisins that she held out to him—for both these young people

had given up the practice of going out for luncheon—and kept her hand for a moment to kiss her finger tips. He did not speak for a moment.

"Well?" she said.

"I say!" he said without any movement. "Let's go."

"Go!" She did not understand him at first, and then her heart began to beat very rapidly.

"Stop this—this humbugging," he explained. "It's like the Picture and the Bust. I can't stand it. Let's go. Go off and live together—until we can marry. Dare you?"

"Do you mean *now*?"

"At the end of the session. It's the only clean way for us. Are you prepared to do it?"

Her hands clenched. "Yes," she said, very faintly. And then: "Of course! Always. It is what I have wanted, what I have meant all along."

She stared before her, trying to keep back a rush of tears.

Capes kept obstinately stiff, and spoke between his teeth.

"There's endless reasons, no doubt, why we shouldn't," he said. "Endless. It's wrong in the eyes of most people. For many of them it will smirch us forever. You *do* understand?"

"Who cares for most people?" she said, not looking at him.

"I do. It means social isolation—struggle."

"If you dare—I dare," said Ann Veronica. "I was never so clear in all my life as I have been in this business." She lifted steadfast eyes to him. "Dare!" she said. The tears were welling over now, but her voice was steady. "You're not a man for me—not one of a sex, I mean. You're just a particular being with nothing else in the world to class with you. You are just necessary to life for me. I've never met any one like you. To have you is all important. Nothing else weighs against it. Morals only begin when that is settled. I sha'n't

care a rap if we can never marry. I'm not a bit afraid of anything—scandal, difficulty, struggle. I rather want them. I do want them."

"You'll get them," he said. "This means a plunge."

"Are you afraid?"

"Only for you! Most of my income will vanish. Even unbelieving biological demonstrators must respect decorum; and besides, you see—you were a student. We shall have—hardly any money." I don't care."

"Hardship and danger."

"With you!"

"And as for your people?"

"They don't count. That is the dreadful truth. This—all this swamps them. They don't count, and I don't care."

Capes suddenly abandoned his attitude of meditative restraint. "By Jove!" he broke out, "one tries to take a serious, sober view. I don't quite know why. But this is a great lark, Ann Veronica! This turns life into a glorious adventure!"

"Ah!" she cried in triumph.

"I shall have to give up biology, anyhow. I've always had a sneaking desire for the writing trade. That is what I must do. I can."

"Of course you can."

"And biology was beginning to bore me a bit. One research is very like another. Latterly I've been doing things. Creative work appeals to me wonderfully. Things seem to come rather easily. But that, and that sort of thing, is just a day-dream. For a time I must do journalism and work hard. What isn't a day-dream is this: that you and I are going to put an end to flummery—and go!"

"Go!" said Ann Veronica, clenching her hands.

"For better or worse."

"For richer or poorer."

She could not go on, for she was laughing and crying at the same time. "We were bound to do this when you

kissed me," she sobbed through her tears. "We have been all this time. Only your queer code of honor—Honor! Once you begin with love you have to see it through."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAST DAYS AT HOME.

They decided to go to Switzerland at the session's end. "We'll clean up everything tidy," said Capes.

For her pride's sake, and to save herself from long day-dreams and an unappeasable longing for her lover, Ann Veronica worked hard at her biology during those closing weeks. She was, as Capes has said, a hard young woman. She was keenly resolved to do well in the school examination, and not to be drowned in the seas of emotion that threatened to submerge her intellectual being.

Nevertheless, she could not prevent a rising excitement as the dawn of the new life drew near to her—a thrilling of the nerves, a secret and delicious exaltation above the common circumstance of existence. Sometimes her straying mind would become astonishingly active—embroidering bright and decorative things that she could say to Capes; sometimes it passed into a state of passive acquiescence, into a radiant, formless, golden joy. She was aware of people—her aunt, her father, her fellow students, friends, and neighbors—moving about outside this glowing secret, very much as an actor is aware of the dim audience beyond the barrier of the footlights. They might applaud, or object, or interfere, but the drama was her very own. She was going through with that, anyhow.

The feeling of last days grew stronger with her as their number diminished. She went about the familiar home with a clearer and clearer sense of inevitable conclusions. She became exceptionally considerate and affectionate with her

father and aunt, and more and more concerned about the coming catastrophe that she was about to precipitate upon them. Her aunt had an exasperating habit of interrupting her work with demands for small household services, but now Ann Veronica rendered them with a queer readiness of anticipatory propitiation. She was greatly exercised by the problem of confiding in the Widgetts; they were dears, and she talked away two evenings with Constance without broaching the topic; she made some vague intimations in letters to Miss Miniver that Miss Miniver failed to mark. But she did not bother her head very much about her relations with these sympathizers.

And at length her penultimate day in Morningside Park dawned for her. She got up early, and walked about the garden in the dewy June sunshine and revived her childhood. She was saying good-by to childhood and home, and her making; she was going out into the great, multitudinous world; this time there would be no returning. She was at the end of girlhood and on the eve of a woman's crowning experience. She visited the corner that had been her own little garden—her forget-me-nots and candytuft had long since been elbowed into insignificance by weeds; she visited the raspberry canes that had sheltered that first love affair with the little boy in velvet, and the greenhouse where she had been wont to read her secret letters. Here was the place behind the shed where she used to hide from Roddy's persecutions, and here the border of herbaceous perennials under whose stems was fairyland. The back of the house had been the Alps for climbing, and the shrubs in front of it a Terai. The knots and broken pale that made the garden-fence scalable, and gave access to the fields behind, were still to be traced. And here against a wall were the plum trees. In spite of wasps and her father, she had stolen

plums; and once because of discovered misdeeds, and once because she had realized that her mother was dead, she had lain on her face in the unmown grass, beneath the elm trees that came beyond the vegetables, and poured out her soul in weeping.

Remote little Ann Veronica! She would never know the heart of that child again! That child had loved fairy princes with velvet suits and golden locks, and she was in love with a real man named Capes, with little gleams of gold on his cheek and a pleasant voice, and firm and shapely hands. She was going to him soon and certainly, going to his strong, embracing arms. She was going through a new world with him side by side. She had been so busy with life that, for a vast gulf of time, as it seemed, she had given no thought to those ancient, imagined things of her childhood. Now, abruptly, they were real again, though very distant, and she had come to say farewell to them across one sundering year.

She was unusually helpful at breakfast, and unselfish about the eggs; and then she went off to catch the train before her father's. She did this to please him. He hated traveling second-class with her—indeed, he never did—but he also disliked traveling in the same train when his daughter was in an inferior class, because of the look of the thing. So he liked to go by a different train. And in the Avenue she had an encounter with Ramage.

It was an odd little encounter, that left vague and dubitable impressions in her mind. She was aware of him—a silk-hatted, shiny-black figure on the opposite side of the Avenue; and then, abruptly and startlingly, he crossed the road and saluted and spoke to her.

"I *must* speak to you," he said. "I can't keep away from you."

She made some inane response. She was struck by a change in his appearance. His eyes looked a little bloodshot

to her; his face had lost something of its ruddy freshness.

He began a jerky, broken conversation that lasted until they reached the station, and left her puzzled at its drift and meaning. She quickened her pace, and so did he, talking at her slightly averted ear. She made lumpish and inadequate interruptions rather than replies. At times he seemed to be claiming pity from her; at times he was threatening her with her check and exposure; at times he was boasting of his inflexible will, and how, in the end, he always got what he wanted. He said that his life was boring and stupid without her. Something or other—she did not catch what—he was damned if he could stand. He was evidently nervous, and very anxious to be impressive; his projecting eyes sought to dominate. The crowning aspect of the incident, for her mind, was the discovery that he and her indiscretion with him no longer mattered very much. Its importance had vanished with her abandonment of compromise. Even her debt to him was a triviality now.

And of course! She had a brilliant idea. It surprised her she hadn't thought of it before! She tried to explain that she was going to pay him forty pounds without fail next week. She said as much to him. She repeated this breathlessly.

"I was glad you did not send it back again," he said.

He touched a long-standing sore, and Ann Veronica found herself vainly trying to explain—the inexplicable. "It's because I mean to send it back altogether," she said.

He ignored her protests in order to pursue some impressive line of his own.

"Here we are, living in the same suburb," he began. "We have to be—modern."

Her heart leaped within her as she caught that phrase. That knot also would be cut. Modern, indeed! She

was going to be as primordial as chipped flint.

In the late afternoon as Ann Veronica was gathering flowers for the dinner table, her father came strolling across the lawn toward her with an affectation of great deliberation.

"I want to speak to you about a little thing, Vee," said Mr. Stanley.

Ann Veronica's tense nerves started, and she stood still with her eyes upon him, wondering what it might be that impended.

"You were talking to that fellow Ramage to-day—in the Avenue. Walking to the station with him."

So that was it!

"He came and talked to me."

"Ye-e-es." Mr. Stanley considered. "Well, I don't want you to talk to him," he said, very firmly.

Ann Veronica paused before she answered. "Don't you think I ought to?" she asked, very submissively.

"No." Mr. Stanley coughed and faced toward the house. "He is not—I don't like him. I think it inadvisable. I don't want an intimacy to spring up between you and a man of that type."

Ann Veronica reflected. "I *have*—had one or two talks with him, daddy."

"Don't let there be any more. I—in fact, I dislike him extremely."

"Suppose he comes and talks to me?"

"A girl can always keep a man at a distance if she cares to do it. She—she can snub him."

Ann Veronica picked a cornflower

"I wouldn't make this objection," Mr. Stanley went on, "but there are things—there are stories about Ramage. He's— He lives in a world of possibilities outside your imagination. His treatment of his wife is most unsatisfactory. Most unsatisfactory. A bad man, in fact. A dissipated, loose-living man."

"I'll try not to see him again," said

Ann Veronica. "I didn't know you objected to him, daddy."

"Strongly," said Mr. Stanley, "very strongly."

The conversation hung. Ann Veronica wondered what her father would do if she were to tell him the full story of her relations with Ramage.

"A man like that taints a girl by looking at her, by his mere conversation." He adjusted his glasses on his nose. There was another little thing he had to say. "One has to be so careful of one's friends and acquaintances," he remarked, by way of transition. "They mold one insensibly." His voice assumed an easy, detached tone. "I suppose, Vee, you don't see much of those Widgetts now?"

"I go in and talk to Constance sometimes."

"Do you?"

"We were great friends at school."

"No doubt. Still, I don't know whether I quite like— Something ramshackle about those people, Vee. While I am talking about your friends, I feel—I think you ought to know how I look at it." His voice conveyed studied moderation. "I don't mind, of course, your seeing her sometimes; still there are differences—differences in social atmospheres. One gets drawn into things. Before you know where you are you find yourself in a complication. I don't want to influence you unduly, but—they're artistic people, Vee. That's the fact about them. We're different."

"I suppose we are," said Vee, rearranging the flowers in her hand.

"Friendships that are all very well between schoolgirls don't always go on into later life. It's—it's a social difference."

"I like Constance very much."

"No doubt. Still, one has to be reasonable. As you admitted to me—one has to square one's self with the world. You don't know. With people of that sort all sorts of things may happen. We don't want things to happen."

Ann Veronica made no answer.

A vague desire to justify himself muffled her father. "I may seem unduly—*anxious*. I can't forget about your sister. It's that has always made me—*She*, you know, was drawn into a set—didn't discriminate. Private theatricals."

Ann Veronica remained anxious to hear more of her sister's story from her father's point of view, but he did not go on. Even so much allusion as this to that family shadow, she felt, was an immense recognition of her ripening years. She glanced at him. He stood a little anxious and fussy, bothered by the responsibility of her, entirely careless of what her life was or was likely to be, ignoring her thoughts and feelings, ignorant of every fact of importance in her life, explaining everything he could not understand in her as nonsense and perversity, concerned only with a terror of bothers and undesirable situations. "We don't want things to happen!" Never had he shown his daughter so clearly that the womenkind he was persuaded he had to protect and control could please him in one way, and in one way only, and that was by doing nothing except the punctual domestic duties and being nothing except restful appearances. He had quite enough to see to and worry about in the city without their doing things. He had no use for Ann Veronica; he had never had a use for her since she had been too old to sit upon his knee. Nothing but the constraint of social usage now linked him to her. And the less "anything" happened the better. The less she lived, in fact, the better. These realizations rushed into Ann Veronica's mind and hardened her heart against him. She spoke slowly.

"I may not see the Widgetts for some little time, father," she said. "I don't think I shall."

"Some little tiff?"

"No; but I don't think I shall see them."

Suppose she were to add, "I am going away!"

"I'm glad to hear you say it," said Mr. Stanley, and was so evidently pleased that Ann Veronica's heart smote her.

"I am very glad to hear you say it," he repeated, and refrained from further inquiry. "I think we are growing sensible," he said. "I think you are getting to understand me better."

He hesitated, and walked away from her toward the house. Her eyes followed him. The curve of his shoulders, the very angle of his feet, expressed relief at her apparent obedience. "Thank goodness!" said that retreating aspect; *that's* said and over. Vee's all right. There's nothing happened at all!" She didn't mean, he concluded, to give him any more trouble ever, and he was free to begin a fresh chromatic novel—he had just finished the "Blue Lagoon," which he thought very beautiful and tender and absolutely irrelevant to Morningside Park—or work in peace at his microtome without bothering about her in the least.

The immense disillusionment that awaited him! The devastating disillusionment! She had a vague desire to run after him, to state her case to him, to wring some understanding from him of what life was to her. She felt a cheat and a sneak to his unsuspecting, retreating back.

"But what can one do?" asked Ann Veronica.

She dressed carefully for dinner in a black dress that her father liked, and that made her look serious and responsible. Dinner was quite uneventful. Her father read a draft prospectus warily, and her aunt dropped fragments of her projects for managing while the cook had a holiday. After dinner Ann Veronica went into the drawing-room

with Miss Stanley, and her father went up to his den for his pipe and pensive petrography. Later in the evening she heard him whistling, poor man!

She felt very restless and excited. She refused coffee, though she knew that anyhow she was doomed to a sleepless night. She took up one of her father's novels and put it down again, fretted up to her own room for some work, sat on her bed and meditated upon the room that she was now really abandoning forever, and returned at length with a stocking to darn. Her aunt was making herself cuffs out of little slips of insertion under the newly lit lamp.

Ann Veronica sat down in the other armchair and darned badly for a minute or so. Then she looked at her aunt, and traced with a curious eye the careful arrangement of her hair, her sharp nose, the little, drooping lines of mouth and chin and cheek.

Her thought spoke aloud. "Were you ever in love, aunt?" she asked.

Her aunt glanced up startled, and then sat very still, with hands that had ceased to work. "What makes you ask such a question, Vee?" she said.

"I wondered."

Her aunt answered in a low voice: "I was engaged to him, dear, for seven years, and then he died."

Ann Veronica made a sympathetic little murmur.

"He was in holy orders, and we were to have been married when he got a living. He was a Wiltshire Edmondshaw, a very old family."

Ann Veronica hesitated with a question that had leaped up in her mind, and that she felt was cruel. "Are you sorry you waited, aunt?" she said.

Her aunt was a long time before she answered. "His stipend forbade it," she said, and seemed to fall into a train of thought. "It would have been rash and unwise," she said at the end of a meditation. "What he had was altogether insufficient."

Ann Veronica looked at the mildly pensive gray eyes and the comfortable, rather refined face with a penetrating curiosity. Presently her aunt sighed deeply and looked at the clock. "Time for my patience," she said. She got up, put the neat cuffs she had made into her workbasket, and went to the bureau for the little cards in the morocco case. Ann Veronica jumped up to get her the card table.

"I haven't seen the new patience, dear," she said. "May I sit beside you?"

"It's a very difficult one," said her aunt. "Perhaps you will help me shuffle?"

Ann Veronica did, and also assisted nimbly with the arrangements of the rows of eights with which the struggle began. Then she sat watching the play, sometimes offering a helpful suggestion, sometimes letting her attention wander to the smoothly shining arms she had folded across her knees just below the edge of the table. She was feeling extraordinarily well that night, so that the sense of her body was a deep delight, a realization of a gentle warmth and strength and elastic firmness. Then she glanced at the cards again, over which her aunt's many-ringed hand played, and then at the rather weak, rather plump face that surveyed its operations.

It came to Ann Veronica that life was wonderful beyond measure. It seemed incredible that she and her aunt were, indeed, creatures of the same blood, only by a birth or so different beings, and part of the same broad interlacing stream of human life that has invented the fauns and nymphs, Astarte, Aphrodite, Freya, and all the twining beauty of the gods. The love songs of all the ages were singing in her blood, the scent of night stock from the garden filled the air, and the moths that beat upon the closed frames of the window next the lamp set her mind dreaming of kisses in the dusk. Yet her aunt, with a ringed hand flitting to her lips and a

puzzled, worried look in her eyes, deaf to all this riot of warmth, and flitting desire, was playing patience—playing patience, as if Dionysius and her curate had died together. A faint buzz above the ceiling witnessed that petrography, too, was active. Gray and tranquil world! Amazing, passionless world! A world in which days without meaning, days in which “we don’t want things to happen” followed days without meaning—until the last thing happened, the ultimate, unavoidable, coarse, “disagreeable.” It was her last evening in that wrapped life against which she had rebelled. Warm reality was now so near her she could hear it beating in her ears. Away in London even now Capes was packing and preparing; Capes, the magic man whose truth turned one to trembling fire. What was he doing? What was he thinking? It was less than a day now, less than twenty hours. Seventeen hours, sixteen hours. She glanced at the soft-ticking clock with the exposed brass pendulum upon the white marble mantel, and made a rapid calculation. To be exact, it was just sixteen hours and twenty minutes. The slow stars circled on to the moment of their meeting. The softly glittering summer stars! She saw them shining over mountains of snow, over valleys of haze and warm darkness. There would be no moon.

“I believe after all it’s coming out!” said Miss Stanley. “The aces made it easy.”

Ann Veronica started from her reverie, and sat up in her chair, became attentive. “Look, dear,” she said presently, “you can put the ten on the Jack.”

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

Next day Ann Veronica and Capes felt like new-born things. It seemed to them they could never have been really alive before, but only dimly anticipat-

ing existence. They sat face to face beneath an experienced-looking rucksack and a brand-new portmanteau and a leather handbag, in the afternoon-boat train that goes from Charing Cross to Folkestone for Boulogne. They tried to read illustrated papers in an unconcerned manner and with forced attention, lest they should catch the leaping exultation in each other’s eyes. And they admired Kent sedulously from the windows.

They crossed the channel in sunshine and a breeze that just ruffled the sea to glittering scales of silver. Some of the people who watched them standing side by side thought they must be newly wedded because of their happy faces, and others that they were an old-established couple because of their easy confidence in each other.

At Boulogne they took train to Basle; next morning they breakfasted together in the buffet of that station, and thence they caught the Interlaken express, and so went by way of Spiez to Frutigen. There was no railway between Frutigen in those days; they sent their baggage by post to Kandersteg, and walked along the mule path to the left of the stream to that queer hollow among the precipices, Blau See, where the petrifying branches of trees lie in the blue deeps of an icy lake, and pine trees clamber among gigantic boulders. A little inn flying a Swiss flag nestles under a great rock, and there they put aside their knapsacks and lunched and rested in the mid-day shadow of the gorge and the scent of resin. And later they paddled in a boat above the mysterious deeps of the See, and peered down into the green-blues and the blue-greens together. By that time it seemed to them they had lived together twenty years.

Except for one memorable school excursion to Paris, Ann Veronica had never yet been outside England. So that it seemed to her the whole world had changed—the very light of it had changed. Instead of English villas and

cottages there were chalets and Italian-built houses shining white; there were lakes of emerald and sapphire and clustering castles, and such sweeps of hill and mountain, such shining uplands of snow, as she had never seen before. Everything was fresh and bright, from the kindly manners of the Frutigen cobbler, who hammered mountain nails into her boots, to the unfamiliar wild flowers that spangled the wayside. And Capes had changed into the easiest and jolliest companion in the world. The mere fact that he was there in the train alongside her, helping her, sitting opposite to her in the dining car, presently sleeping on a seat within a yard of her, made her heart sing until she was afraid their fellow passengers would hear it. It was too good to be true. She would not sleep for fear of losing a moment of that sense of his proximity. To walk beside him, dressed akin to him, rucksacked and companionable, was bliss in itself; each step she took was like stepping once more across the threshold of heaven.

One trouble, however, shot its slanting bolts athwart the shining warmth of that opening day and marred its perfection, and that was the thought of her father.

She had treated him badly; she had hurt him and her aunt; she had done wrong by their standards, and she would never persuade them that she had done right. She thought of her father in the garden, and of her aunt with her patience, as she had seen them—how many ages was it ago? Just one day intervened. She felt as if she had struck them unawares. The thought of them distressed her without subtracting at all from the oceans of happiness in which she swam. But she wished she could put the thing she had done in some way to them so that it would not hurt them so much as the truth would certainly do. The thought of their faces, and particularly of her aunt's, as it would

meet the fact—disconcerted, unfriendly, condemning, pained—occurred to her again and again.

"Oh! I wish," she said, "that people thought alike about these things."

Capes watched the limpid water dripping from his oar. "I wish they did," he said, "but they don't."

"I feel—all this is the rightest of all conceivable things. I want to tell every one. I want to boast myself."

"I know."

"I told them a lie. I told them lies. I wrote three letters yesterday and tore them up. It was so hopeless to put it to them. At last—I told a story."

"You didn't tell them our position?"

"I implied we had married."

"They'll find out. They'll know."

"Not yet."

"Sooner or later."

"Possibly—bit by bit. But it was hopelessly hard to put. I said I knew he disliked and distrusted you and your work—that you shared all Russell's opinions; he hates Russell beyond measure—and that we couldn't possibly face a conventional marriage. What else could one say? I left him to suppose—a registry perhaps."

Capes let his oar smack on the water.

"Do you mind very much?"

He shook his head.

"But it makes me feel inhuman," he added.

"And me."

"It's the perpetual trouble," he said, "of parent and child. They can't help seeing things in the way they do. Nor can we. *We* don't think they're right, but they don't think we are. A deadlock. In a very definite sense we are in the wrong—hopelessly in the wrong. But—it's just this: who was to be hurt?"

"I wish no one had to be hurt," said Ann Veronica. "When one is happy—I don't like to think of them. Last time I left home I felt as hard as nails. But this is all different. It is different."

"There's a sort of instinct of rebellion," said Capes. "It isn't anything to do with our times particularly. People think it is, but they are wrong. It's to do with adolescence. Long before religion and society heard of Doubt, girls were all for midnight coaches and Gretna Green. It's a sort of home-leaving instinct."

He followed up a line of thought.

"There's another instinct, too," he went on, "in a state of suppression, unless I'm very much mistaken; a child-expelling instinct. I wonder. There's no family uniting instinct, anyhow; it's habit and sentiment and material convenience hold families together after adolescence. There's always friction, conflict, unwilling concessions. Always! I don't believe there is any strong natural affection at all between parents and growing-up children. There wasn't, I know, between myself and my father. I didn't allow myself to see things as they were in those days; now I do. I bored him. I hated him. I suppose that shocks one's ideas. It's true. There are sentimental and traditional deferences and reverences, I know, between father and son; but that's just exactly what prevents the development of an easy friendship. Father-worshipping sons are abnormal—and they're no good. No good at all. One's got to be a better man than one's father, or what is the good of successive generations? Life is rebellion, or nothing."

He rowed a stroke and watched the swirl of water from his oar broaden and die away. At last he took up his thoughts again: "I wonder if, some day, one won't need to rebel against customs and laws? If this discord will have gone? Some day, perhaps—who knows?—the old won't coddle and hamper the young, and the young won't need to fly in the faces of the old. They'll face facts as facts, and understand.—Oh, to face facts! God! what a world it might be if people faced facts! Understand-

ing! Understanding! There is no other salvation. Some day older people, perhaps, will trouble to understand younger people, and there won't be these fierce disruptions; there won't be barriers one must defy or perish. That's really our choice now, defy—or futility. The world, perhaps, will be educated out of its idea of fixed standards. I wonder, Ann Veronica, if, when our time comes, we shall be any wiser?"

Ann Veronica watched a water beetle fussing across the green depths. "One can't tell. I'm a female thing at bottom. I like high tone for a flourish and stars and ideas; but I want my things."

Capes thought.

"It's odd—I have no doubt in my mind that what we are doing is wrong," he said. "And yet I do it without compunction."

"I never felt so absolutely right," said Ann Veronica.

"You are a female thing at bottom," he admitted. "I'm not nearly so sure as you. As for me, I look twice at it. Life is two things, that's how I see it; two things mixed and muddled up together. Life is morality—life is adventure. Squire and master. Adventure rules, and morality—looks up the trains in the Bradshaw. Morality tells you what is right, and adventure moves you. If morality means anything it means keeping bounds, respecting implications, respecting implicit bounds. If individuality means anything it means breaking bounds—adventure. Will you be moral and your species, or immoral and yourself? We've decided to be immoral. We needn't try and give ourselves airs. We've deserted the posts in which we found ourselves, cut our duties, exposed ourselves to risk that may destroy any sort of social usefulness in us. I don't know. One keeps rules in order to be one's self. One studies nature in order not to be blindly ruled by her. There's no sense in morality, I suppose, unless you are fundamentally immoral."

She watched his face as he traced his way through these speculative thickets.

"Look at our affair," he went on, looking up at her. "No power on earth will persuade me we're not two rather disreputable persons. You desert your home; I throw up useful teaching, risk every hope in your career. Here we are absconding, pretending to be what we are not; shady, to say the least of it. It's not a bit of good pretending there's any Higher Truth or wonderful principle in this business. There isn't. We never started out in any high-browed manner to scandalize and Shelleyfy. When first you left your home you had no idea that I was the hidden impulse. I wasn't. You came out like an ant for your nuptial flight. It was just a chance that we in particular hit against each other—nothing predestined about it. We just hit against each other, and here we are flying off at a tangent, a little surprised at what we are doing, all our principles abandoned, and tremendously and quite unreasonably proud of ourselves. Out of all this we have struck a sort of harmony. And it's gorgeous!"

"Glorious!" said Ann Veronica.

"Would you like us—if some one told you the bare outline of our story?—and what we are doing?"

"I shouldn't mind," said Ann Veronica.

"But if some one else asked your advice? If some one else said, 'Here is my teacher, a jaded married man on the verge of middle age, and he and I have a violent passion for one another. We propose to disregard all our ties, all our obligations, all the established prohibitions of society, and begin life together afresh.' What would you tell her?"

"If she asked advice, I should say she wasn't fit to do anything of the sort. I should say that having a doubt was enough to condemn it."

"But waive that point."

"It would be different all the same. It wouldn't be you."

"It wouldn't be you either. I suppose that's the gist of the whole thing." He stared at a little eddy. "The rule's all right, so long as there isn't a case. Rules are for established things, like the pieces and positions of a game. Men and women are not established things; they're experiments, all of them. Every human being is a new thing, exists to do new things. Find the thing you want to do most intensely, make sure that's it, and do it with all your might. If you live, well and good; if you die, well and good. Your purpose is done. Well, this is *our* thing."

He woke the glassy water to swirling activity again, and made the deep-blue shapes below writhe and shiver.

"This is *my* thing," said Ann Veronica, softly, with thoughtful eyes upon him.

Then she looked up the sweep of pine trees to the towering, sunlit cliffs and the high heaven above and then back to his face. She drew in a deep breath of the sweet mountain air. Her eyes were soft and grave, and there was the faintest of smiles upon her resolute lips.

Later they loitered along a winding path above the inn, and made love to one another. Their journey had made them indolent, the afternoon was warm, and it seemed impossible to breathe a sweeter air. The flowers and turf, a wild strawberry, a rare butterfly, and suchlike little intimate things had become more interesting than mountains. Their flitting hands were always touching. Deep silences came between them.

"I had thought to go on to Kandersteg," said Capes, "but this is a pleasant place. There is not a soul in the inn but ourselves. Let us stay the night here. Then we can loiter and gossip to our heart's content."

"Agreed," said Ann Veronica.

"After all, it's our honeymoon."

"All we shall get," said Ann Veronica.

"This place is very beautiful."

"Any place would be beautiful," said Ann Veronica, in a low voice.

For a time they walked in silence.

"I wonder," she began, presently, "why I love you—and love you so much? I know now what it is to be an abandoned female. I *am* an abandoned female. I'm not ashamed—of the things I'm doing. I want to put myself into your hands. You know—I wish I could roll my little body up small and squeeze it into your hand and grip your fingers upon it. Tight. I want you to hold me and have me *so*. Everything. Everything. It's a pure joy of giving—giving to *you*. I have never spoken of these things to any human being. Just dreamed—and ran away even from my dreams. It is as if my lips had been sealed about them. And now I break the seals—for you. Only I wish—I wish to-day I was a thousand times, ten thousand times more beautiful."

Capes lifted her hand and kissed it.

"You are a thousand times more beautiful," he said, "than anything else could be. You are you. You are all the beauty in the world. Beauty doesn't mean, never has meant, anything—anything at all but you. It heralded you, promised you."

They lay side by side in a shallow nest of turf and mosses among boulders and stunted bushes on a high rock, and watched the day sky deepen to evening between the vast precipices overhead and looked over the treetops down the widening gorge. A distant suggestion of chalets and a glimpse of the road set them talking for a time of the world they had left behind.

Capes spoke casually of their plans for work. "It's a flabby, loose-willed world we have to face. It won't even know whether to be scandalized at us

or forgiving. It will hold aloof, a little undecided whether to pelt or not."

"That depends whether we carry ourselves as though we expected pelting," said Ann Veronica.

"We won't."

"No fear!"

"Then, as we succeed, it will begin to sidle back to us. It will do its best to overlook things."

"If we let it, poor dear."

"That's if we succeed. If we fail," said Capes, "then——"

"We aren't going to fail," said Ann Veronica.

Life seemed a very brave and glorious enterprise to Ann Veronica that day. She was quivering with the sense of Capes at her side and glowing with heroic love; it seemed to her that if they put their hands jointly against the Alps and pushed they would be able to push them aside. She lay and nibbled at a sprig of dwarf rhododendron.

"Fail!" she said.

Presently it occurred to Ann Veronica to ask about the journey he had planned. He had his sections of the Siegfried map folded in his pocket, and he squatted up with his legs crossed like an Indian idol while she lay prone beside him and followed every movement of his indicatory finger.

"Here," he said, "is this Blau See, and here we rest until to-morrow. I think we rest here until to-morrow?"

There was a brief silence.

"It's a very pleasant place," said Ann Veronica, biting a rhododendron stalk through, and with that faint shadow of a smile returning to her lips.

"And then?" said Ann Veronica.

"Then we go on to this place, the Oeschinensee. It's a lake among precipices, and there is a little inn where we can stay, and sit and eat our dinner at a pleasant table that looks upon the lake. For some days we shall be very idle there among the trees and rocks.

There are boats on the lake and shady depths and wildernesses of pine wood. After a day or so, perhaps, we will go on one or two little excursions and see how good your head is—a mild scramble or so; and then up to a hut on a pass just here, and out upon the Blumlis-alp glacier that spreads out so and so."

She roused herself from some dream at the word. "Glaciers?" she said.

"Under the *Wilde Frau*—which was named after you."

He bent and kissed her hair and paused, and then forced his attention back to the map. "One day," he resumed, "we will start off early and come down into Kandersteg and up these zig-zags and here and here, and so past this Daubensee to a tiny inn—it won't be busy yet, though; we may get it all to ourselves—on the brim of the steepest zigzag you can imagine, thousands of feet of zigzag; and you will sit and eat lunch with me and look out across the Rhone Valley and over blue distances beyond blue distances to the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa and a long regiment of sunny, snowy mountains. And when we see them we shall at once want to go to them—that's the way with beautiful things—and down we shall go, like flies down a wall, to Leukerbad, and so to Leuk Station, here, and then by train up the Rhone Valley and this little side valley to Stalden; and there, in the cool of the afternoon, we shall start off up a gorge, torrents and cliffs below us and above us, to sleep in a halfway inn, and go on next day to Saas Fee, Saas of the Magic, Saas of the Pagan People. And there, about Saas, are ice and snows again, and sometimes we will loiter among the rocks and trees about Saas or peep into Samuel Butler's chapels, and sometimes we will climb up out of the way of the other people onto the glaciers and snow. And, for one expedition at least, we will go up this desolate valley here to Mattmark, and so on to Monte Moro. There indeed you

see Monte Rosa. Almost the best of all."

"Is it very beautiful?"

"When I saw it there it was very beautiful. It was wonderful. It was the crowned queen of mountains in her robes of shining white. It towered up high above the level of the pass, thousands of feet, still, shining, and white, and below, thousands of feet below, was a floor of little woolly clouds. And then presently these clouds began to wear thin and expose steep, deep slopes, going down and down, with grass and pine trees, down and down, and at last, through a great rent in the clouds, bare roofs, shining like very minute pin-heads, and a road like a fiber of white silk—Macugnana, in Italy. That will be a fine day—it will have to be, when first you set eyes on Italy. That's as far as we go."

"Can't we go down into Italy?"

"No," he said; "it won't run to that now. We must wave our hands at the blue hills far away there and go back to London and work."

"But Italy——"

"Italy's for a good girl," he said, and laid his hand for a moment on her shoulder. "She must look forward to Italy."

"I say," she reflected, "you *are* rather the master, you know."

The idea struck him as novel. "Of course I'm manager of this expedition," he said, after an interval of self-examination.

She slid her cheek down the tweed sleeve of his coat. "Nice sleeve," she said, and came to his hand and kissed it.

"I say!" he cried. "Look here! Aren't you going a little too far? This—this is degradation—making a fuss with sleeves. You mustn't do things like that."

"Why not?"

"Free woman—and equal."

"I do it—of my own free will," said

Ann Veronica, kissing his hand again. "It's nothing to what I *will* do."

"Oh, well!" he said, a little doubtfully, "it's just a phase," and bent down and rested his hand on her shoulder for a moment, with his heart beating and his nerves a-quiver. Then as she lay very still, with her hands clinched and her black hair tumbled about her face, he came still closer and softly kissed the nape of her neck.

Most of the things that he had planned they did. But they climbed more than he had intended because Ann Veronica proved rather a good climber, steady-headed and plucky, rather daring, but quite willing to be cautious at his command.

One of the things that most surprised him in her was her capacity for blind obedience. She loved to be told to do things.

He knew the circle of mountains about Saas Fee fairly well; he had been there twice before, and it was fine to get away from the straggling pedestrians into the high, lonely places, and sit and munch sandwiches and talk together and do things together that were just a little difficult and dangerous. And they could talk, they found; and never once, it seemed, did their meaning and intention hitch. They were enormously pleased with one another; they found each other beyond measure better than they had expected, if only because of the want of substance in mere expectation. Their conversation degenerated again and again into a strain of self-congratulation that would have irked an eaves-dropper.

"You're—I don't know," said Ann Veronica. "You're splendid."

"It isn't that you're splendid or I," said Capes. "But we satisfy one another. Heaven alone knows why. So completely! The oddest fitness! What is it made of? Texture of skin and texture of mind? Complexion and

voice. I don't think I've got illusions, nor you. If I had never met anything of you at all but a scrap of your skin binding a book, Ann Veronica, I know I would have kept that somewhere near to me. All your faults are just jolly modeling to make you real and solid."

"The faults are the best part of it," said Ann Veronica; "why, even our little vicious strains run the same way. Even our coarseness."

"Coarse?" said Capes, "We're not coarse."

"But if we were?" said Ann Veronica.

"I can talk to you and you to me without a scrap of effort," said Capes; "that's the essence of it. It's made up of things as small as the diameter of hairs and big as life and death. One always dreamed of this and never believed it. It's the rarest luck, the wildest, most impossible accident. Most people, every one I know else, seem to have mated with foreigners and to talk uneasily in unfamiliar tongues, to be afraid of the knowledge the other one has, of the other one's perpetual misjudgment and misunderstandings.

"Why don't you wait?" he added.

Ann Veronica had one of her flashes of insight.

"One doesn't wait," said Ann Veronica.

She expanded that. "I shouldn't have waited," she said. "I might have muddled for a time. But it's as you say. I've had the rarest luck and fallen on my feet."

"We've both fallen on our feet! We're the rarest of mortals! The real thing! There's not a compromise nor a sham nor a concession between us. We aren't afraid; we don't bother. We don't consider each other; we needn't. That wrapped life, as you call it—we've burned the confounded rags! Danced out of it! We're stark!"

"Stark!" echoed Ann Veronica.

As they came back from that day's climb—it was up the Mittaghorn—they had to cross a shining space of wet, steep rocks between two grass slopes that needed a little care. There were a few close, broken fragments of rock to reckon with upon the ledges, and one place where hands did as much work as toes. They used the rope—not that a rope was at all necessary, but because Ann Veronica's exalted state of mind made the fact of the rope agreeably symbolical; and, anyhow, it did insure a joint death in the event of some remotely possible mischance. Capes went first, finding footholds and, where the drops in the strata-edges came like long, awkward steps, placing Ann Veronica's feet. About halfway across this interval, when everything seemed going well, Capes had a shock.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Ann Veronica, with extraordinary passion. "My God!" And ceased to move.

Capes became rigid and adhesive. Nothing ensued. "All right?" he asked.

"I'll have to pay it."

"Eh?"

"I've forgotten something. Oh, cuss it!"

"Eh?"

"He said I would."

"What?"

"That's the devil of it!"

"Devil of what? You *do* use vile language!"

"Forget about it like this."

"Forget *what*?"

"And I said I wouldn't. I said I'd do anything. I said I'd make shirts."

"Shirts?"

"Shirts at one-and-something a dozen. Oh, goodness! Bilking! Ann Veronica, you're a bilker!"

Pause.

"Will you tell me what all this is about?" said Capes.

"It's about forty pounds."

Capes waited patiently.

"I'm sorry. But you've got to lend me forty pounds."

"It's some sort of a delirium," said Capes. "The rarefied air? I thought you had a better head."

"No! I'll explain lower. It's all right. Let's go on climbing now. It's a thing I've unaccountably overlooked. All right really. It can wait a bit longer. I borrowed forty pounds from Mr. Ramage. Thank goodness, you'll understand. That's why I chucked Manning. All right, I'm coming. But all this business has driven it clean out of my head. That's why he was so annoyed, you know."

"Who was annoyed?"

"Mr. Ramage—about the forty pounds." She took a step. "My dear," she added, by way of afterthought, "you *do* obliterate things!"

They found themselves next day talking love to one another high up on some rocks above a steep bank of snow that overhung a precipice on the eastern side of the Fee glacier. By this time Capes' hair had bleached nearly white, and his skin had become a skin of red copper shot with gold. They were now both in a state of unprecedented physical fitness. And such skirts as Ann Veronica had had when she entered the valley of Saas were safely packed away in the hotel, and she wore a leather belt and loose knickerbockers and puttees—a costume that suited the fine, long lines of her limbs far better than any feminine walking dress could do. Her complexion had resisted the snow glare wonderfully; her skin had only deepened its natural warmth a little under the Alpine sun. She had pushed aside her azure veil, taken off her snow glasses, and sat smiling under her hand at the shining glories—the lit cornices, the blue shadows, the softly rounded, enormous snow masses, the deep places full of quivering luminosity—of the Taschhorn and Dom. The sky was cloudless, effulgent blue.

Capes sat watching and admiring her, and then he fell praising the day and fortune and their love for each other.

"Here we are," he said, "shining through each other like light through a stained-glass window. With this air in our blood, this sunlight soaking us. Life is so good. Can it ever be so good again?"

Ann Veronica put out a firm hand and squeezed his arm. "It's very good," she said. "It's gloriously good!"

"Suppose now—look at this long snow slope and then that blue deep beyond—do you see that round pool of color in the ice—a thousand feet or more below? Yes? Well, think—we've got to go but ten steps and lie down and put our arms about each other. See? Down we should rush in a foam—in a cloud of snow—to flight and a dream. All the rest of our lives would be together then, Ann Veronica. Every moment. And no ill chances."

"If you tempt me too much," she said, after a silence, "I shall do it. I need only just jump up and throw myself upon you. I'm a desperate young woman. And then as we went down you'd try to explain. And that would spoil it. You know you don't mean it."

"No, I don't. But I liked to say it."

"Rather! But I wonder why you don't mean it?"

"Because, I suppose, the other thing is better. What other reason could there be? It's more complex, but it's better. *This*, this glissade, would be damned scoundrelism. You know that, and I know that, though we might be put to it to find a reason why. It would be swindling. Drawing the pay of life and then not living. And besides—we're going to live, Ann Veronica! Oh, the things we'll do, the life we'll lead! There'll be trouble in it at times—you and I aren't going to run without friction. But we've got the brains to get over that, and tongues in our heads to talk to each other. We

sha'n't hang up on any misunderstanding. Not us! And we're going to fight that old world down there. That old world that had shoved up that silly old hotel, and all the rest of it. If we don't live it will think we are afraid of it. Die, indeed! We're going to do work; we're going to unfold about each other; we're going to have children."

"Girls!" cried Ann Veronica.

"Boys!" said Capes.

"Both!" said Ann Veronica. "Lots of 'em!"

Capes chuckled. "You delicate female!"

"Who cares," said Ann Veronica, "seeing it's you? Warm, soft little wonders! Of course I want them."

"All sorts of things we're going to do," said Capes; "all sorts of times we're going to have. Sooner or later we'll certainly do something to clean those prisons you told me about—lime-wash the underside of life. You and I. We can love on a snow cornice, we can love over a pail of whitewash. Love anywhere. Anywhere! Moonlight and music—pleasing, you know, but quite unnecessary. We met dissecting dogfish. Do you remember your first day with me? Do you indeed remember? The smell of decay and cheap methylated spirit! My dear! We've had so many moments! I used to go over the times we'd had together, the things we'd said—like a rosary of beads. But now it's beads by the cask—like the hold of a West African trader. It feels like too much gold dust clutched in one's hand. One doesn't want to lose a grain. And one must—some of it must slip through one's fingers."

"I don't care if it does," said Ann Veronica. "I don't care a rap for remembering. I care for you. This moment couldn't be better until the next moment comes. That's how it takes me. Why should we hoard? We aren't going out presently, like Japanese lanterns in a gale. It's the poor dears who do,

who know they will, know they can't keep it up, who need to clutch at wayside flowers. And put 'em in little books for remembrance. Flattened flowers aren't for the likes of us. Moments, indeed! We like each other fresh and fresh. It isn't illusions—for us. We two just love each other—the real, identical other—all the time."

"The real, identical other," said Capes, and took and bit the tip of her little finger.

"There's no delusions, so far as I know," said Ann Veronica.

"I don't believe there is one. If there is, it's a mere wrapping—there's better underneath. It's only as if I'd begun to know you the day before yesterday or thereabouts. You keep on coming truer, after you have seemed to come altogether true. You—brick!

"To think," he cried, "you are ten years younger than I! There are times when you make me feel a little thing at your feet—a young, silly, protected thing. Do you know, Ann Veronica, it is all a lie about your birth certificate; a forgery—and fooling at that. You are one of the Immortals. Immortal! You were in the beginning, and all the men in the world who have known what love is have worshiped at your feet. You have converted me to—Lester Ward! You are my dear friend, you are a slip of a girl, but there are moments when my head has been on your breast, when your heart has been beating close to my ears, when I have known you for the goddess, when I have wished myself your slave, when I have wished that you could kill me for the joy of being killed by you. You are the High Priestess of Life."

"Your priestess," whispered Ann Veronica, softly. "A silly little priestess who knew nothing of life at all until she came to you."

They sat for a time without speaking a word, in an enormous, shining globe of mutual satisfaction.

"Well," said Capes, at length, "we've to go down, Ann Veronica. Life waits for us."

He stood up and waited for her to move.

"Gods!" cried Ann Veronica, and kept him standing. "And to think that it's not a full year ago since I was a black-hearted rebel schoolgirl, distressed, puzzled, perplexed, not understanding that this great force of love was bursting its way through me. All those nameless discontents—they were no more than love's birth pangs. I felt—I felt living in a masked world. I felt as though I had bandaged eyes. I felt—wrapped in thick cobwebs. They blinded me. They got in my mouth. And now—Dear! Dear! The dayspring from on high hath visited me. I love. I am loved. I want to shout! I want to sing! I am glad! I am glad to be alive because you are alive! I am glad to be a woman because you are a man! I am glad! I am glad! I am glad! I thank God for life and you. I thank God for His sunlight on your face. I thank God for the beauty you love and the faults you love. I thank God for the very skin that is peeling from your nose, for all things great and small that make us what we are. This is grace I am saying! Oh! my dear! all the joy and weeping of life are mixed in me now and all the gratitude. Never a newborn dragon-fly that spread its wings in the morning has felt as glad as I!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN PERSPECTIVE.

About four years and a quarter later—to be exact, it was four years and four months—Mr. and Mrs. Capes stood side by side upon an old Persian carpet that did duty as a hearthrug in the dining room of their flat and surveyed a shining dinner table, set for four people, lit by skillfully shaded electric lights, brightened by frequent gleams of silver,

and carefully and simply adorned with sweet-pea blossoms. Capes had altered scarcely at all during the interval, except for a new quality of smartness in the cut of his clothes, but Ann Veronica was nearly half an inch taller; her face was at once stronger and softer, her neck firmer and rounder, and her carriage definitely more womanly than it had been in the days of her rebellion. She was a woman now to the tips of her fingers; she had said good-by to her girlhood in the old garden four years and a quarter ago. She was dressed in a simple evening gown of soft, creamy silk, with a yoke of dark, old embroidery that enhanced the gentle gravity of her style, and her black hair flowed off her open forehead to pass under the control of a simple ribbon of silver. A silver necklace enhanced the dusky beauty of her neck. Both husband and wife affected an unnatural ease of manner for the benefit of the efficient parlor maid, who was putting the finishing touches to the sideboard arrangements.

"It looks all right," said Capes.

"I think everything's right," said Ann Veronica, with the roaming eye of a capable but not devoted house mistress.

"I wonder if they will seem altered," she remarked for the third time.

"There I can't help," said Capes.

He walked through a wide-open archway, curtained with deep-blue curtains, into the apartment that served as a reception room. Ann Veronica, after a last survey of the dinner appointments, followed him, rustling, came to his side by the high brass fender, and touched two or three ornaments on the mantel above the cheerful fireplace.

"It's still a marvel to me that we are to be forgiven," she said, turning.

"My charm of manner, I suppose. But, indeed, he's very human."

"Did you tell him of the registry office?"

"No—certainly not so emphatically as I did about the play."

"It was an inspiration—your speaking to him?"

"I felt impudent. I believe I am getting impudent. I had not been near the Royal Society since—since you disgraced me. What's that?"

They both stood listening. It was not the arrival of the guests, but merely the maid moving about in the hall.

"Wonderful man!" said Ann Veronica, reassured, and stroking his cheek with her finger.

Capes made a quick movement as if to bite that aggressive digit, but it withdrew to Ann Veronica's side.

"I was really interested in his stuff. I was talking to him before I saw his name on the card beside the row of microscopes. Then, naturally, I went on talking. He—he has rather a poor opinion of his contemporaries. Of course, he had no idea who I was."

"But how did you tell him? You've never told me. Wasn't it—a little bit of a scene?"

"Oh! let me see! I said I hadn't been at the Royal Society *soirée* for four years, and got him to tell me about some of the fresh Mendelian work. He loves the Mendelians because he hates all the big names of the eighties and nineties. Then I think I remarked that science was disgracefully underendowed, and confessed I'd had to take to more profitable courses. 'The fact of it is,' I said, 'I'm the new playwright, Thomas More. Perhaps you've heard?' Well, you know, he had."

"Fame!"

"Isn't it? 'I've not seen your play, Mr. More,' he said, 'but I'm told it's the most amusing thing in London at the present time. A friend of mine, Ogilvy—I suppose that's Ogilvy & Ogilvy, who do so many divorces, Vee?—was speaking very highly of it—very highly!'" He smiled into her eyes.

"You are developing far too retentive a memory for praises," said Ann Veronica.

"I'm still new to them. But after that it was easy. I told him instantly and shamelessly that the play was going to be worth ten thousand pounds. He agreed it was disgraceful. Then I assumed a rather portentous manner to prepare him."

"How? Show me."

"I can't be portentous, dear, when you're about. It's my other side of the moon. But I was portentous, I can assure you. 'My name's *not* More, Mr. Stanley,' I said. 'That's my pet name.'"

"Yes?"

"I think—yes, I went on in a pleasing blend of the casual and *sotto voce*, 'The fact of it is, sir, I happen to be your son-in-law, Capes. I do wish you could come and dine with us some evening. It would make my wife very happy.'"

"What did he say?"

"What does any one say to an invitation to dinner point-blank? One tries to collect one's wits. 'She is constantly thinking of you,' I said."

"And he accepted meekly?"

"Practically. What else could he do? You can't kick up a scene on the spur of the moment in the face of such conflicting values as he had before him. With me behaving as if everything was infinitely matter-of-fact, what could he do? And just then Heaven sent old Manningtree—I didn't tell you before of the fortunate intervention of Manningtree, did I? He was looking quite infernally distinguished, with a wide crimson ribbon across him—what is a wide crimson ribbon? Some sort of knight, I suppose. He is a knight. 'Well, young man,' he said, 'we haven't seen you lately,' and something about 'Bateson & Co.'—he's frightfully anti-Mendelian—having it all their own way. So I introduced him to my father-in-law like a shot. I think that *was* decision. Yes, it was Manningtree really secured your father. He——"

"Here they are!" said Ann Veronica as the bell sounded.

They received the guests in their pretty little hall with genuine effusion. Miss Stanley threw aside a black cloak to reveal a discreet and dignified arrangement of brown silk, and then embraced Ann Veronica with warmth. "So very clear and cold," she said. "I feared we might have a fog." The housemaid's presence acted as a useful restraint. Ann Veronica passed from her aunt to her father, and put her arms about him and kissed his cheek. "Dear old daddy!" she said, and was amazed to find herself shedding tears. She veiled her emotion by taking off his overcoat. "And this is Mr. Capes?" she heard her aunt saying.

All four people moved a little nervously into the drawing-room, maintaining a sort of fluttered amiability of sound and movement. Mr. Stanley professed a great solicitude to warm his hands. "Quite unusually cold for the time of the year," he said. "Everything very nice, I am sure," Miss Stanley murmured to Capes as he steered her to a place upon the little sofa before the fire. Also she made little, pussylike sounds of a reassuring nature.

"And let's have a look at you, Vee!" said Mr. Stanley, standing up with a sudden geniality and rubbing his hands together.

Ann Veronica, who knew her dress became her, dropped a curtsy to her father's regard.

Happily they had no one else to wait for, and it heartened her mightily to think that she had ordered the promptest possible service of the dinner. Capes stood beside Miss Stanley, who was beaming unnaturally, and Mr. Stanley, in his effort to seem at ease, took entire possession of the hearthrug.

"You found the flat easily?" said Capes in the pause. "The numbers are a little difficult to see in the archway. They ought to put a lamp."

Her father declared there had been no difficulty.

"Dinner is served, m'm," said the efficient parlor maid in the archway, and the worst was over.

"Come, daddy," said Ann Veronica, following her husband and Miss Stanley; and in the fullness of her heart she gave a friendly squeeze to the paternal arm.

"Excellent fellow!" he answered a little irrelevantly. "I didn't understand, Vee."

"Quite charming apartments," Miss Stanley admired; "charming! Everything is so pretty and convenient."

The dinner was admirable as a dinner; nothing went wrong, from the golden and excellent clear soup to the delightful iced *marrons* and cream; and Miss Stanley's praises died away to an appreciative acquiescence. A brisk talk sprang up between Capes and Mr. Stanley, to which the two ladies subordinated themselves intelligently. The burning topic of the Mendelian controversy was approached on one or two occasions, but avoided dexterously; and they talked chiefly of letters and art and the censorship of the English stage. Mr. Stanley was inclined to think of censorship should be extended to the supply of what he styled latter-day fiction; good, wholesome stories were being ousted, he said, by "vicious, corrupting stuff" that "left a bad taste in the mouth." He declared that no book could be satisfactory that left a bad taste in the mouth, however much it seized and interested the reader at the time. He did not like it, he said, with a significant look, to be reminded of either his books or his dinners after he had done with them. Capes agreed with the utmost cordiality.

"Life is upsetting enough, without the novels taking a share," said Mr. Stanley.

For a time Ann Veronica's attention was diverted by her aunt's interest in the salted almonds.

"Quite particularly nice," said her aunt. "Exceptionally so."

When Ann Veronica could attend again she found the men were discussing the ethics of the depreciation of house property through the increasing tumult of traffic in the West End, and agreeing with each other to a devastating extent. It came into her head with real emotional force that this must be some particularly fantastic sort of dream. It seemed to her that her father was in some inexplicable way meaner looking than she had supposed, and yet also, as unaccountably, appealing. His tie had demanded a struggle; he ought to have taken a clean one after his first failure. Why was she noting things like this? Capes seemed self-possessed and elaborately genial and commonplace, but she knew him to be nervous by a little occasional clumsiness, by the faintest shadow of vulgarity in the urgency of his hospitality. She wished he could smoke and dull his nerves a little. A gust of irrational impatience blew through her being. Well, they'd got to the pheasants, and in a little while he would smoke. What was it she had expected? Surely her moods were getting a little out of hand.

She wished her father and aunt would not enjoy their dinner with such quiet determination. Her father and her husband, who had both been a little pale at their first encounter, were growing now just faintly flushed. It was a pity people had to eat food.

"I suppose," said her father, "I have read at least half the novels that have been at all successful during the last twenty years. Three a week is my allowance, and, if I get short ones, four. I change them in the morning at Cannon Street, and take my book as I come down."

It occurred to her that she had never seen her father dining out before, never watched him critically as an equal. To Capes he was almost deferential, and she had never seen him deferential in the old time, never. The dinner was

stranger than she had ever anticipated. It was as if she had grown right past her father into something older and of infinitely wider outlook, as if he had always been unsuspectedly a flattened figure, and now she had discovered him from the other side.

It was a great relief to arrive at last at that pause when she could say to her aunt, "Now, dear?" and rise and hold back the curtain through the archway. Capes and her father stood up, and her father made a belated movement toward the curtain. She realized that he was the sort of man one does not think much about at dinners. And Capes was thinking that his wife was a supremely beautiful woman. He reached a silver cigar and cigarette box from the sideboard and put it before his father-in-law, and for a time the preliminaries of smoking occupied them both. Then Capes flittered to the hearthrug and poked the fire, stood up, and turned about. "Ann Veronica is looking very well, don't you think?" he said, a little awkwardly.

"Very," said Mr. Stanley. "Very," and cracked a walnut appreciatively.

"Life—things—— I don't think her prospects now—— Hopeful outlook."

"You were in a difficult position," Mr. Stanley pronounced, and seemed to hesitate whether he had not gone too far. He looked at his port wine as though that tawny ruby contained the solution of the matter. "All's well that ends well," he said; "and the less one says about things the better."

"Of course," said Capes, and threw a newly lit cigar into the fire through sheer nervousness. "Have some more port wine, sir?"

"It's a very sound wine," said Mr. Stanley, consenting with dignity.

"Ann Veronica has never looked quite so well, I think," said Capes, clinging, because of a preconceived plan, to the suppressed topic.

At last the evening was over, and

Capes and his wife had gone down to see Mr. Stanley and his sister into a taxicab, and had waved an amiable farewell from the pavement steps.

"Great dears!" said Capes, as the vehicle passed out of sight.

"Yes, aren't they?" said Ann Veronica, after a thoughtful pause. And then, "They seem changed."

"Come in out of the cold," said Capes, and took her arm.

"They seem smaller, you know, even physically smaller," she said.

"You've grown out of them. Your aunt liked the pheasant."

"She liked everything. Did you hear us through the archway, talking cookery?"

They went up by the lift in silence.

"It's odd," said Ann Veronica, re-entering the flat.

"What's odd?"

"Oh, everything!"

She shivered, and went to the fire and poked it. Capes sat down in the arm-chair beside her.

"Life's so queer," she said, kneeling and looking into the flames. "I wonder—I wonder if we shall ever get like that."

She turned a firelit face to her husband.

"Did you tell him?"

Capes smiled faintly. "Yes."

"How?"

"Well—a little clumsily."

"But how?"

"I poured him out some port wine, and I said—let me see—oh, 'You are going to be a grandfather!'"

"Yes. Was he pleased?"

"Calmly! He said—you won't mind my telling you?"

"Not a bit."

"He said, 'Poor Alice has got no end!'"

"Alice's are different," said Ann Veronica, after an interval. "Quite different. She didn't choose her man. Well, I told aunt. Husband of mine,

I think we have rather overrated the emotional capacity of those—those dears.”

“What did your aunt say?”

“She didn’t even kiss me. She said”—Ann Veronica shivered again—“I hope it won’t make you uncomfortable, my dear”—like that—and whatever you do, do be careful of your hair!” I think—I judge from her manner—that she thought it was just a little indelicate of us—considering everything; but she tried to be practical and sympathetic and live down to our standards.”

Capes looked at his wife’s unsmiling face.

“Your father,” he said, “remarked that all’s well that ends well, and that he was disposed to let bygones be bygones. He then spoke with a certain fatherly kindness of the past.”

“And my heart has ached for him!”

“Oh, no doubt it cut him at the time. It must have cut him.”

“We might even have—given it up for them!”

“I wonder if we could.”

“I suppose all is well that ends well. Somehow to-night—I don’t know.”

“I suppose so. I’m glad the old sore is assuaged. Very glad. But if we had gone under—”

They regarded one another silently, and Ann Veronica had one of her penetrating flashes.

“We are not the sort that goes under,” said Ann Veronica, holding her hands so that the red reflections vanished from her eyes. “We settled long ago—we’re hard stuff. We’re hard stuff!”

Then she went on: “To think that is my father! Oh, my dear! He stood over me like a cliff; the thought of him nearly turned me aside from everything we have done. He was the social order; he was law and wisdom. And they come here, and they look at our furniture to see if it is good; and they are not glad, it does not stir them, that at

last, at last we can dare to have children.”

She dropped back into a crouching attitude and began to weep. “Oh, my dear!” she cried, and suddenly flung herself into her husband’s arms.

“Do you remember the mountains?”

Do you remember how we loved one another? How intensely we loved one another! Do you remember the light on things and the glory of things? I’m greedy, I’m greedy! I want children like the mountains and life like the sky. Oh! and love—love! We’ve had so splendid a time, and fought our fight and won. And it’s like the petals falling from a flower. Oh, I’ve loved love, dear! I’ve loved love and you, and the glory of you; and the great time is over, and I have to go carefully and bear children, and—take care of my hair—and when I am done with that I shall be an old woman. The petals have fallen—the red petals we loved so. We’re hedged about with discretion—and all this furniture—and successes! We are successful at last! Successful! But the mountains, dear! We won’t forget the mountains, dear, ever. That shining slope of snow, and how we talked of death! We might have died! Even when we are old, when we are rich as we may be, we won’t forget the time when we cared nothing for anything but the joy of one another, when we risked everything for one another, when all the wrappings and coverings seemed to have fallen from life and left it light and fire. Stark and stark! Do you remember it all? Say you will never forget! That these common things and secondary things sha’n’t overwhelm us. These petals! I’ve been wanting to cry all the evening, cry here on your shoulder, for my petals. Silly woman! I’ve never had these crying fits before.”

“Blood of my heart!” whispered Capes, holding her close to him. “I know. I understand.”

THE END.

What the Ladies Say—

ALL men are poor creatures—more or less.—*George Sand.*

It is always incomprehensible to a man that a woman should refuse an offer of marriage. A man always imagines a woman to be ready for anybody who asks her.—*Jane Austen.*

VANITY never leads a man toward the error of sacrificing himself for another!—*Madame de Staël.*

OH, I am so sick of the young men of the present day! Poor, puny things. Creatures so absorbed in care about their pretty faces and their white hands, and their small feet; as if a man had anything to do with beauty! As if loveliness were not the special prerogative of woman—her legitimate appanage and heritage! I grant an ugly woman is a blot on the fair face of creation; but as to the gentlemen, let them be solicitous to possess only strength and valor.—*Charlotte Brontë.*

How arrogant men are!—Even philanthropists,
Who try to take a wife up in the way
They put down a subscription check.—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

I HAVE often observed that a thorough scoundrel is often one of the most agreeable of men, and that the most companionable people are frequently the most destitute of dignity of character. But we have an absurd conceit that makes us believe that we can exert an influence over such men, and when they deceive us, the fault is as much ours as theirs.—*George Sand.*

HE was made of excellent human dough, and had the rare merit of knowing that his talents, even if let loose, would not set the smallest stream on fire; hence he liked the prospect of a wife to whom he could say: "What shall we do?" about this or that. In short he was ready to endure a good deal of pre-dominance, which, after all, a man could always put down when he liked. Why not? A man's mind—what there is of it—has always the advantage of being masculine—as the smallest birch tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm—and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality. Sir James might not have originated this estimate, but a kind Providence furnishes the limpest personality with a little gum or starch in the form of tradition.—*George Eliot.*

IF all the truth were known, most men would look foolish, and the men who thank God that they are not as other men, soonest of all.—*Mrs. Humphrey Ward.*

CAN spirit from the tomb, or fiend from hell,
More hateful, more malignant be than man?—*Joanna Baillie.*

Men—On the Same Subject

A MAN of straw is worth a woman of gold.—*French Proverb.*

How dare you place anything before a man . . .
The male . . . is all qualities—he is action and power;
The flush of the known universe is in him;
Scorn becomes him well, and appetite and defiance become him well;
The wildest, largest passions, bliss that is utmost, sorrow that is utmost, become him well—pride is for him.
The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent to the soul;
Knowledge becomes him—he likes it always—he brings everything to the test of himself;
Whatever the survey, whatever the sea and the sail, he strikes soundings at last only here.—*Walt Whitman.*

I AM fearfully and wonderfully made.—*Old Testament.*

MAN is a name of honor for a king.—*George Chapman.*

Hamlet: What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god, the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!—*William Shakespeare.*

MAN is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.—*Alfred, Lord Tennyson.*

INVOLUNTARILY we always read as superior beings. Universal history, the poets, the romancers, do not in their stateliest pictures—in the sacerdotal, the imperial palaces, in the triumphs of will or genius—anywhere lose our ear, anywhere make us feel that we intrude, that this is for better men; but rather is it true that in their grandest strokes we feel most at home. All that Shakespeare says of the king, yonder slip of a boy that reads in the corner feels to be true of himself. We sympathize in the great moments of history, in the great discoveries, the great resistances, the great prosperities of men—because there law was enacted, the sea was searched, the land was found, or the blow was struck, for us, as we ourselves in that place would have done or applauded.—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

SOMETIMES, when I compare myself with other men, it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they, as if I had a warrant and surety at their hands which my fellows have not, and were especially guided and guarded. I do not flatter myself, but if it be possible they flatter me.—*David Thoreau.*

WE appear to ourselves as so many heroes, genii, demiurges, gods—yes, as God Himself.—*Anatole France.*

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J.D.^{By} Beresford

Author of



*Mountains
of the Moon*

That Sort of Thing

I KNEW them both intimately, as we say. I knew him indeed more intimately than I have known any one; knew him, perhaps, as well as it is possible for us to know any friend, or lover, or even ourselves. So much must necessarily be hidden. We know so little of the roots from which spring our passions or our impulses, our loves or our disgusts.

He—I will call him Andrew Grey—was at that time a young man of twenty-seven; a harried professor in never mind what university—which was how I first came to know him. He had married absurdly young, but he and his wife had no children. She—his wife, that is to say—was the sort of young woman who so often catches the eye and entangles the desires of youth: pretty in a pert, common way; rather plump and vivacious; and—I must confess it or you will never understand Andrew's temptation—entirely selfish and unintelligent.

They were not well off. He made,

at the most, about five hundred pounds a year; and they lived in a little suburban villa, the center of an admiring circle of still poorer neighbors that Mrs. Grey had gathered round her. And from that circle she received the kind of adoration and respect that was all she really cared for. Her husband's profession put him above the rank of the clerks and second-grade civil servants, who were their neighbors, and she condescended to them, as a minor royalty might condescend to a society of snobs.

Nearly every evening Andrew came home to some form of deadly entertainment in which he was expected to shine: book teas, whist drives, charades, or, perhaps, worst of all, mere conversation. And at the least sign of any remonstrance, Mrs. Grey would burst into tears, and then passionately point out to him that this was her only amusement in life. He had his books, of course; he was so clever and so superior; but was she to have nothing? And the

tragedy of the affair lay in the fact that he could understand and sympathize with her claim; that he knew by that time how incapable she was of enjoying anything but the small flatteries and adulations of this unintelligent society. She had, indeed, the merest rudiments of what he understood by intelligence. Even the theater bored her. She could not keep her attention on anything above the level of the music halls or the most trivial of comedies.

Andrew found a measure of release, as so many other men and women do, in his work. He was ambitious with the ambition of the scientific mind. He wanted to know; to make some new discovery, however small, not in order to win recognition or money, but solely to add something to his own, and incidentally the world's, knowledge. He had the use of a laboratory, and he took to staying up there in the evening, and sometimes late into the night; although his wife never failed to rate him when he came home.

"It was," he once said to me, "almost satisfying to observe the perfect regularity of her reactions. I could have plotted the curve of her tantrums according to the degree of aggravation she believed herself to have received. She never seemed to realize that she was repeating herself. If I were late home every night for a week, she would go through the same performance, with the same verve, and I might say, freshness, on each occasion. She would appear to be as much surprised, insulted, outraged, on the sixth night as on the first. She put the same astonishing vigor into my punishment."

Andrew's own reactions were far from regular. Sometimes he sulked; sometimes he tried to argue as patiently as might be; sometimes he pleaded with her to the verge of love-making; and sometimes he lost his temper outright. The last method was the only effective

one. She never respected him until he became violent.

In the end she must inevitably have won. No man of Andrew's kind is capable of resisting, alone, the immensely powerful inertia of a mind like hers. Every scene between them drew upon his nervous resources, but not at all upon hers. She had no imagination, and her spirit was never touched. It would have been just a matter of time, a year or two more or less, before she finally achieved her object, broke him in to do her will, if he had not——

He met Marion Roberts at a soirée given by his students. She also taught; though her subjects were not the same as his. She was tall, dark, decidedly statuesque. Her girl students liked her up to a point, but did not adore her. They thought her reserved, rather cold. She seemed to have no intimate friends. She wore glasses, dressed with a dignity that became her, and was just six months younger than Andrew.

Those were the outer aspects of Marion Roberts; the obvious things that nearly every one saw from almost the same angle. From the outsider's point of view she was an easy person to describe. It was not what Andrew saw when he talked to her at that soirée. He found intelligence, calm, gentleness, understanding. He found all the qualities that bitter experience had taught him he ought to have looked for in a wife. And he thought Marion the loveliest, most adorable creature he had ever met.

And she? Oh! she was pining, wasting for romance. She lacked that something, and she knew it, which excited a man's imagination. The only men who had come within sight of making love to her had been younger than herself: shy, worshiping boys, whose worship would have withered at the first kiss. And at that first meeting she felt the stimulating, almost intoxicating quality

of Andrew's admiration. It was something she had definitely wanted.

They had agreed to meet again before they parted. There had so far been no confidences. She did not know then that he was married. And she went home to give rein to those dreams she had hitherto so steadily repressed—he to take his customary rating and to compare his wife with Marion.

He made the admission of his marriage at their second meeting, without any further confession, and she received his statement quietly. The fact had not been an element in her dreams of the night before, but when she heard it she suffered no shock of surprise. It was very wonderful that she, of all people, should not be shocked, she told herself, but in some strange, inexplicable way it seemed to her *right* that he should be married.

"I don't know that there is any real reason why we shouldn't meet again?" he said tentatively, just before they parted.

She pretended a faint surprise. "Oh, no! Why should there be?" she asked.

"None; none whatever," Andrew replied, looking down; "unless——"

"Unless?" she prompted him calmly.

"Oh! I don't know," Andrew said, glancing into her handsome, rather inexpressive eyes for a moment, and finding no encouragement. "There is no 'unless,'" he concluded with a smile.

She hated herself a minute later for having been so unresponsive, but, after all, she had seen him only twice.

That was the first beginning of love-making between them, and it was not until their fifth meeting that he told her the truth about his home life—in the Elgin Room of the British Museum one Saturday afternoon.

She listened very quietly—she appreciated the full value of this confession—and while she listened to his stumblings and repetitions and desperate searchings for quiet emphasis, she was

coaching herself anew in the course that she had for more than a fortnight now, nervously but obstinately, determined to follow.

"I wonder if you would care to come back with me to tea, in my little flat?" she said steadily, when his rather incoherent, suppressed revelation had tailed out into silence. "It is so difficult to talk here."

They hardly spoke to one another on their way to the flat, and while she made tea for him, and while they drank it, they talked hurriedly in the manner of new acquaintances who nervously dread a silence.

And then the silence came, and they were afraid to break it. I hesitate to tell you how long the silence lasted, in which those two, sitting intensely still, thought so feverishly and so separately. I make no claim to omniscience in making that statement. I happen to know what each of them was thinking about during that protracted hesitation; and I may say that the woman's thought was the bolder of the two, the more determined.

She was not harassed by any consideration of the loyalty due to intimacies that, however fleshly, had once been sweet. She had no memories of a youthful ideal that had found a temporary satisfaction; nor of the image, whether or not it had any origin in fact, of the generous and beautiful surrender made by the young and innocent woman whom he had known in the first weeks of his marriage. Marion's problem was more personal than his; and, in a sense, at once more selfish and more real.

It was growing dark; they were sitting within touch of one another, although they had not touched; and it was Marion who, at last, found the courage silently to stretch out her hand and take his.

And at that the current of thought and feeling began to flow from one to

the other, so that in a few moments they found themselves talking as lovers without ever having made a beginning in speech; found themselves wading, swimming, drowning in the wonder of knowing that each had a marvelous and most precious possession in the other; though, indeed, so rare and delicate were all their first raptures and ecstasies, that it was not until nearly a fortnight later that his wife could honestly have established her claim for a divorce.

Not that she ever made any such claim, for she never knew that her husband loved another woman. She lacked not only intelligence, but also that strange aptitude for intuitive knowledge, which with so many women takes the place of rational mental ability. And Marion and Andrew were compelled to chicanery and dishonesty by their circumstances. An action for divorce would have lost them their appointments; and neither of them had any other resources.

Now, I can see that by all the rules this liaison should have ended in some form of unhappiness for the two people concerned; perhaps in a growing realization of their own deceit and unworthiness; in moral scruples and an uneasy conscience; in a tragic falling out of love; or worst of all in mere dullness and ennui, terminating in a gradual separation.

I know that something of this sort *ought* to have happened. I can tell you only that it did not. For three years it was a perpetual delight and joy to them both. They had found the romance of a secret liberty in a world of inhibitions and artificial restraints. Those quiet evenings at Marion's flat, when Andrew was supposed to be working late at the laboratory, were evenings spent among the isles of the blessed. Every stolen meeting entailed some risk; every kiss was earned by adventure; every embrace gained passion

from their realization that it was illegal. You may, perhaps, find it a little difficult to understand from the picture I have given you of Marion that she was capable of such relaxation, such surrender to the joys of love. But the difficulty, if it exists, is solely due to our habit of judging a woman by that semblance of herself which she chooses to display to the world. There was not probably one young woman in Marion's class who would not have been staggered and incredulous if she had been told the details of her professor's secret life. But, I ask you, how many times have not you yourself received staggering and incredible news of some woman of your acquaintance, and received it, perhaps, with the astounded comment: "Well! she was quite the very last person I should ever have suspected of *that* sort of thing." Oh! believe me, it is quite as often as not that "very last person" who is—er—well, *capable de tout*.

Life wore another face for Andrew in those three years. It is true that he still had to endure the tortures of his own home life, but now he could suffer them as we suffer a pain from which we know that we shall presently find relief; so that we may even cherish the present agony to heighten the coming ecstasy. And he has told me that when he received the usual harangue from his wife after one of those evenings spent as she supposed in his laboratory, that he found a queer compensation in the knowledge that he really deserved her scolding. He was no longer tortured by the injustice and unreasonableness of her complaint; he could find comfort in saying to himself: "Ah! my dear, I wonder what you'd say if you knew the truth?"

Strange consolation! Yet for some men and women it is just such an outlet as this that gives relief to the ordered, mechanical rule of life. The need for adventure, for some whole-

hearted breaking in secret of the rules of society is almost—I must stress that “almost”—essential to them. To break those rules openly and defiantly may be, indeed, more magnificent, but for such as Andrew and Marion it gives less satisfaction. They wanted both worlds, and for a time they enjoyed them both—the world of respect, of intellectual society, of the ordered life on the one hand; and on the other the world of imaginative delight, of fantasy, of a hidden liberty. And in their present enjoyment of either world it was a joy to them to think of the other, whether as a state from which they had escaped or as a state to which they could presently return.

Their tragedy—for poetic justice in surely the queerest possible form overtook them—came by way of the very liberty they once believed themselves to have so ardently sought. But they did not recognize it when it came.

Andrew's wife was caught by the influenza epidemic—the famous epidemic of '90-'91. She had a severe attack, but the attacks of that date were not dangerous, unless aggravated by other complications; which she avoided. She was, so far as her bodily health was concerned, well on the way to recovery when she committed suicide by drowning herself in three feet of water.

Andrew was distressed, immensely distressed; but he had no reason for blaming himself as having in any way determined her death. She had had no suspicion of his unfaithfulness; the strange impulse to suicide had arisen solely from the depression of mind which was a characteristic symptom consequent on that particular epidemic.

He did not see Marion again until nearly a week after the inquest, but then he could keep away no longer, and went to find her at her flat. They were unusually subdued that evening. The tragedy hung over them. They both of them disliked the feeling that they

might in any way be going to profit by it. Not until it was nearly time for him to go, did Andrew say:

“We are free, at last, Marion.”

“Perfectly free,” she said quietly.

“Fate meant us for one another. We have always believed that.”

“Always,” she agreed.

“And now——”

“We must wait at least a year,” she said.

“Six months,” he protested. “I refuse to wait more than six months.” And then unable to interpret her expression, he added: “Marion! you have no sort of doubt? You want to marry me?”

“No sort of doubt, dear,” she assured him.

“But?”

She looked round her little sitting room. “We have been very happy together here,” she said. “I was only wondering if perhaps we should miss something?”

They were married seven months later, but the realization of what they missed came to them so gradually, that it was years before they realized how Fate had punished them by giving them what they had desired.

At first fantasy sufficed; but in the routine of married life a husband forgets to be a lover, a wife to remain, also, a mistress; and the world of secret delight was lost to them. And once lost there came a day when they faced it bravely—it could never again be recovered.

For her perhaps—I am not sure—the ostensible world may have been enough. She had two children; she found an occupation in political work connected with the growing demand for woman's suffrage; she kept her figure, and her friends envied her.

For him, I know all too well that it was not enough; but henceforth no way of escape was open to him. Even if

he had wished to do it, and he did not, he could never have deceived Marion. But his tragedy did not lie there, not in the loss of any physical excitement or satisfaction. Rather was it to be found in his gradual, though ultimately complete, realization that all his imagined love for Marion, and hers for him, had been nothing but a fantasy. If there had been no obstacle, he would

never have believed himself to be in love with her. She had represented for him what, perhaps, the Dionysian legends had represented for the starved minds and suppressed bodies of the poets of ancient Greece—a dream of liberty, the fantasy of the slave. Where there is no restriction, the thought of freedom brings no satisfaction. Freedom, indeed, from what?



WOMEN excel in placing men in an inferior position.—*Paul Bourget.*



SIMPLICITY is not vulgarity, but the looking to affectation of any sort for distinction is.—*William Hazlitt.*



EAGLES may gaze undazzled at the sun, but what diamond eye can with impunity fix itself upon a beautiful woman?—*Theophile Gautier.*



"WHAT is a sensitive person?" said the Cracker to the Roman Candle.

"A person who, because he has corns himself, always treads on other people's toes," answered the Roman Candle.—*Oscar Wilde.*



CALAMITY is welcome to women if they think it will bring truant affection home again; and if you have reduced your mistress to a crust, depend upon it that she won't repine, and only take a little bit of it for herself, provided you will eat the remainder in her company.—*William Makepeace Thackeray.*



To an American, the significance of a skylark is that Shelley sang it to skies where even it could never have mounted; and any one who has heard the nightingale must, if he be open minded, confess its tremendous debt to Keats; a tenth part genuine song, the rest moon, stars, silence, and John Keats—such is the nightingale.—*Richard Le Gallienne.*



"I HAVE sighed in France; I have loved in Italy; I have bargained for Circassians in an Eastern bezestein, and I have lounged at Howell & James' on a sunny day in the season: and my eye is trained and my perception quickened: but I *do* think that there is no such beautiful work of God under the arch of the sky as an American girl in her bellehood."—*N. P. Willis.*

A Book Lovers' Tournament

*Introducing a new kind
of mystery story*

In THE FORETASTE of this issue are announced the title and author of the May anonymous story and the names of the successful entrants in the May BOOK LOVERS' TOURNAMENT.—The Editor.

HOW fully does the style betray the writer? Could you detect the essence of Shakespeare in an obscure passage of his work? Could you read "Dickens" between the lines of a Pickwickian dialogue? Would the felicitous flow of an anonymous extract from a Stevenson romance reveal its author to you?

On the next page you will find a complete story whose title is withheld and whose author is left anonymous. The name of the author is known wherever books are circulated.

Can you identify the author and the story?

* * * * *

IF you can detect the title of this month's anonymous story and the name of its author, send us a letter of not more than one thousand words, and in it tell us:

1. *The title of the story.*
2. *The full name of the story's author.*
3. *Your reason for attributing the story to the author you have named.*
4. *How you discovered the title of the story.*
5. *What you think of the story.*

* * * * *

TO the writer of the most interesting letter composed as above outlined and correctly naming the title and author of the anonymous story appearing in this issue of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, the editors will pay fifty dollars. To each of the writers of the ten letters next in order of excellence the editors will pay five dollars.

* * * * *

LETTERS will be judged on the basis of literary merit and authenticated accuracy. In order to receive consideration, each letter must show that its writer has definite knowledge of the anonymous story's title and author. This knowledge may come of standing familiarity with the works of the author under consideration, or may be derived from inquiry, research, and comparison. But each letter must clearly explain on what authority its writer bases his conclusion. Letters which exhibit evidence of guesswork will not receive consideration.

* * * * *

ALL letters competing in the Book Lovers' Tournament of this issue must be received by the Editor of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, at 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, on or before July 10th, 1926.

The names of successful contestants will be published in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE for the month of September, 1926.

There will be another anonymous story in the August issue.

Who Wrote This Story?



What Is Its Title?

IT matters little," said the old man, "where, or how, I picked up this brief history. If I were to relate it in the order in which it reached me, I should commence in the middle, and when I had arrived at the conclusion, go back for a beginning. It is enough for me to say that some of the circumstances passed before my own eyes. For the remainder I know them to have happened, and there are some persons yet living who will remember them but too well.

"In the Borough High Street, near St. George's Church, and on the same side of the way, stands, as most people know, the smallest of our debtors' prisons, the Marshalsea. Although in later times it has been a very different place from the sink of filth and dirt it once was, even its improved condition holds out but little temptation to the extravagant, or consolation to the provident. The condemned felon has as good a yard for air and exercise in Newgate, as the insolvent debtor in the Marshalsea Prison.

"It may be my fancy, or it may be that I cannot separate the place from the old recollections, associated with it, but this

part of London I cannot bear. The street is broad, the shops are spacious, the noise of passing vehicles, the footsteps of a perpetual stream of people—all the busy sounds of traffic, resound in it from morn to midnight, but the streets around are mean and close; poverty and debauchery lie festering in the crowded alleys; want and misfortune are pent up in the narrow prison; an air of gloom and dreariness seems, in my eyes at least, to hang about the scene, and to impart to it a squalid and sickly hue.

"Many eyes that have long since been closed in the grave, have looked round upon that scene lightly enough, when entering the gate of the old Marshalsea Prison for the first time: for despair seldom comes with the first severe shock of misfortune. A man has confidence in untried friends, he remembers the many offers of service so freely made by his boon companions when he wanted them not; he has hope—the hope of happy inexperience—and however he may bend beneath the first shock, it springs up in his bosom, and flourishes there for a brief space, until it droops beneath the blight of disappointment and

neglect. How soon have those same eyes, deeply sunken in the head, glared from faces wasted with famine, and sallow from confinement, in days when it was no figure of speech to say that debtors rotted in prison, with no hope of release and no prospect of liberty! The atrocity in its full extent no longer exists, but there is enough of it left to give rise to occurrences that make the heart bleed.

"Twenty years ago, that pavement was worn with the footsteps of a mother and child, who, day by day, so surely as the morning came, presented themselves at the prison gate; often, after a night of restless misery and anxious thoughts, were they there, a full hour too soon, and then the young mother turning meekly away, would lead the child to the old bridge, and raising him in her arms to show him the glistening water, tinted with the light of the morning's sun, and stirring with all the bustling preparations for business and pleasure that the river presented at that early hour, endeavor to interest his thoughts in the objects before him. But she would quickly set him down, and, hiding her face in her shawl give vent to the tears that blinded her; for no expression of interest or amusement lighted up his thin and sickly face. His recollections were few enough, but they were all of one kind: all connected with the poverty and misery of his parents. Hour after hour had he sat on his mother's knee, and with childish sympathy watched the tears that stole down her face, and then crept quietly away into some dark corner, and sobbed himself to sleep. The hard realities of the world, with many of its worst privations—hunger and thirst, and cold and want—had all come home to him, from the first dawns of reason; and though the form of childhood was there, its light heart, its merry laugh, and sparkling eyes, were wanting.

"The father and mother looked on

upon this, and upon each other, with thoughts of agony they dared not breathe in words. The healthy, strong-made man, who could have borne almost any fatigue of active exertion, was wasting beneath the close confinement and unhealthy atmosphere of a crowded prison. The slight and delicate woman was sinking beneath the combined effects of bodily and mental illness. The child's young heart was breaking.

"Winter came, and with it weeks of cold and heavy rain. The poor girl had removed to a wretched apartment close to the spot of her husband's imprisonment; and though the change had been rendered necessary by their increasing poverty, she was happier now, for she was nearer him. For two months, she and her little companion watched the opening of the gate as usual. One day she failed to come, for the first time. Another morning arrived, and she came alone. The child was dead.

"They little know, who coldly talk of the poor man's bereavements, as a happy release from pain to the departed, and a merciful relief from expense to the survivor—they little know, I say, what the agony of those bereavements is. A silent look of affection and regard when all other eyes are turned coldly away—the consciousness that we possess the sympathy and affection of one being when all others have deserted us—is a hold, a stay, a comfort, in the deepest affliction, which no wealth could purchase, or power bestow. The child had sat at his parents' feet for hours together, with his little hands patiently folded in each other, and his thin wan face raised towards them. They had seen him pine away, from day to day; and though his brief existence had been a joyless one, and he was now removed to that peace and rest which, child as he was, he had never known in this world, they were his parents, and his loss sunk deep into their souls.

"It was plain to those who looked

upon the mother's altered face, that death must soon close the scene of her adversity and trial. Her husband's fellow prisoners shrank from obtruding on his grief and misery, and left to himself alone the small room he had previously occupied in common with two companions. She shared it with him: and lingering on without pain, but without hope, her life ebbed slowly away.

"She had fainted one evening in her husband's arms, and he had borne her to the open window, to revive her with the air, when the light of the moon falling full upon her face showed him a change upon her features, which made him stagger beneath her weight, like a helpless infant.

"Set me down, George," she said faintly. He did so, and seating himself beside her, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

"It is very hard to leave you, George," she said, "but it is God's will, and you must bear it for my sake. Oh! how I thank Him for having taken our boy! He is happy, and in heaven now. What would he have done here without his mother!"

"You shall not die, Mary, you shall not die!" said the husband, starting up. He paced hurriedly to and fro, striking his head with his clenched fists; then reseating himself beside her, and supporting her in his arms, added more calmly, "Rouse yourself, my dear girl. Pray, pray do. You will revive yet."

"Never again, George; never again," said the dying woman. "Let them lay me by my poor boy now, but promise me that if ever you leave this dreadful place, and should grow rich, you will have us removed to some quiet country churchyard, a long, long way off—very far from here, where we can rest in peace. Dear George, promise me you will."

"I do, I do," said the man throwing himself passionately on his knees be-

fore her. "Speak to me, Mary, another word; one look—but one!"

"He ceased to speak: for the arm that clasped his neck grew stiff and heavy. A deep sigh escaped from the wasted form before him; the lips moved, and a smile played upon the face; but the lips were pallid, and the smile faded into a rigid and ghastly stare. He was alone in the world.

"That night, in the silence and desolation of his miserable room, the wretched man knelt down by the dead body of his wife, and called on God to witness a terrible oath, that from that hour he devoted himself to revenge her death and that of his child; that thenceforth to the last moment of his life, his whole energies should be directed to this one object; that his revenge should be protracted and terrible; that his hatred should be undying and inextinguishable; and should hunt its object through the world.

"The deepest despair, and passion scarcely human, had made such fierce ravages on his face and form, in that one night, that his companions in misfortune shrunk affrighted from him as he passed by. His eyes were bloodshot and heavy, his face a deadly white, and his body bent as if with age. He had bitten his under lip nearly through in the violence of his mental suffering, and the blood which had flowed from the wound had trickled down his chin, and stained his shirt and neckerchief. No tear or sound of complaint escaped him: but the unsettled look, and disordered haste with which he paced up and down the yard, denoted the fever which was burning within.

"It was necessary that his wife's body should be removed from the prison, without delay. He received the communication with perfect calmness, and acquiesced in its propriety. Nearly all the inmates of the prison had assembled to witness its removal; they fell back on either side when the widower ap-

peared; he walked hurriedly forward, and stationed himself, alone, in a little railed area close to the lodge gate, from whence the crowd, with an instinctive feeling of delicacy, had retired. The rude coffin was borne slowly forward on men's shoulders. A dead silence pervaded the throng, broken only by the audible lamentations of the women, and the shuffling steps of the bearers on the stone pavement. They reached the spot where the bereaved husband stood, and stopped. He laid his hand upon the coffin, and mechanically adjusting the pall with which it was covered, motioned them onward. The turnkeys in the prison lobby took off their hats as it passed through, and in another moment the heavy gate closed behind it. He looked vacantly upon the crowd, and fell heavily to the ground.

"Although for many weeks after this he was watched, night and day, in the wildest ravings of fever, neither the consciousness of his loss, nor the recollection of the vow he had made, ever left him for a moment. Scenes changed before his eyes, place succeeded place, and event followed event, in all the hurry of delirium; but they were all connected in some way with the great object of his mind. He was sailing over a boundless expanse of sea, with a blood-red sky above, and the angry waters, lashed into fury beneath, boiling and eddying up on every side. There was another vessel before them, toiling and laboring in the howling storm: her canvas fluttering in ribbons from the mast, and her deck thronged with figures who were lashed to the sides, over which huge waves every instant burst, sweeping away some devoted creature into the foaming sea. Onward they bore, amidst the roaring mass of water, with a speed and force which nothing could resist; and striking the stern of the foremost vessel, crushed her beneath their keel. From the huge whirlpool which the sinking wreck occasioned, arose a shriek so

loud and shrill—the death cry of a hundred drowning creatures, blended into one fierce yell—that it rang far above the war cry of the elements, and echoed and reëchoed till it seemed to pierce air, sky, and ocean. But what was that—that old gray head that rose above the water's surface, and with looks of agony, and screams for aid, buffeted with the waves! One look, and he had sprung from the vessel's side, and with vigorous strokes was swimming toward it. He reached it; he was close upon it. They were *his* features. The old man saw him coming, and vainly strove to elude his grasp. But he clasped him tight, and dragged him beneath the water. Down, down with him, fifty fathoms down; his struggles grew fainter and fainter, until they wholly ceased. He was dead; he had killed him, and had kept his oath.

"He was traversing the scorching sands of a mighty desert, barefooted and alone. The sand choked and blinded him; its fine thin grains entered the very pores of the skin, and irritated him almost to madness. Gigantic masses of the same material, carried forward by the wind, and shone through by the burning sun, stalked in the distance like pillars of living fire. The bones of men, who had perished in the dreary waste, lay scattered at his feet; a fearful light fell on everything around; so far as the eye could reach, nothing but objects of dread and horror presented themselves. Vainly striving to utter a cry of terror, with his tongue cleaving to his mouth, he rushed madly forward. Armed with supernatural strength, he waded through the sand, until exhausted with fatigue and thirst, he fell senseless on the earth. What fragrant coolness revived him; what gushing sound was that? Water! It was indeed a well; and the clear fresh stream was running at his feet. He drank deeply of it, and throwing his aching limbs upon the bank, sank into a delicious trance. The sound of

approaching footsteps aroused him. An old gray-headed man tottered forward to slake his burning thirst. It was *he* again! He wound his arms around the old man's body, and held him back. He struggled and shrieked for water, for but one drop of water to save his life! But he held the old man firmly, and watched his agonies with greedy eyes; and when his lifeless head fell forward on his bosom, he rolled the corpse from him with his feet.

"When the fever left him, and consciousness returned, he awoke to find himself rich and free: to hear that the parent who would have let him die in jail—*would!* who *had* let those who were far dearer to him than his own existence, die of want and sickness of heart that medicine cannot cure—had been found dead on his bed of down. He had had all the heart to leave his son a beggar, but proud even to his health and strength, had put off the act till it was too late, and now might gnash his teeth in the other world, at the thought of the wealth his remissness had left him. He awoke to this, and he awoke to more. To recollect the purpose for which he lived, and to remember that his enemy was his wife's own father—the man who had cast him into prison, and who, when his daughter and her child sued at his feet for mercy, had spurned him from his door. Oh, how he cursed the weakness that prevented him from being up, and active, in his scheme of vengeance!

"He caused himself to be carried from the scene of his loss and misery, and conveyed to a quiet residence on the sea coast, not in the hope of recovering his peace of mind or happiness, for both were fled forever; but to restore his prostrate energies, and meditate on his darling object. And here, some evil spirit cast in his way the opportunity for his first, most horrible revenge.

"It was summertime; and wrapped in his gloomy thoughts, he would issue from his solitary lodgings early in the

evening, and wandering along a narrow path beneath the cliffs, to a wild and lonely spot that had struck his fancy in his ramblings, seat himself on some fallen fragment of the rock, and burying his face in his hands, remain there for hours—sometimes until night had completely closed in, and the long shadows of the frowning cliffs above his head cast a thick black darkness on every object near him.

"He was seated here, one calm evening, in his old position, now and then raising his head to watch the flight of a sea gull, or carry his eye along the glorious crimson path, which, commencing in the middle of the ocean, seemed to lead to a very verge where the sun was setting, when the profound stillness of the spot was broken by a loud cry for help; he listened, doubtful of his having heard aright, when the cry was repeated with even greater vehemence than before, and starting to his feet, he hastened in the direction whence it proceeded.

"The tale told itself at once; some scattered garments lay on the beach; a human head was just visible above the waves at a little distance from the shore; and an old man, wringing his hands in agony, was running to and fro, shrieking for assistance. The invalid, whose strength was now sufficiently restored, threw off his coat, and rushed towards the sea, with the intention of plunging in, and dragging the drowning man ashore.

"'Hasten here, sir, in God's name; help, help, sir, for the love of Heaven. He is my son, sir, my only son!' said the old man, frantically, as he advanced to meet him. 'My only son, sir, and he is dying before his father's eyes!'

"At the first word the old man uttered, the stranger checked himself in his career, and, folding his arms, stood perfectly motionless.

"'Great God!' exclaimed the old man, recoiling. 'Heyling!'

"The stranger smiled and was silent.

"Heyling!" said the old man, wildly. "My boy, Heyling, my dear boy, look, look!" Gasping for breath, this miserable father pointed to the spot where the young man was struggling for life.

"Hark!" said the old man. "He cries once more. He is alive yet. Heyling, save him, save him!"

"The stranger smiled again, and remained immovable as a statue.

"I have wronged you," shrieked the old man, falling on his knees, and clasping his hands together. "Be revenged; take my all, my life; cast me into the water at your feet, and, if human nature can repress a struggle, I will die, without stirring hand or foot. Do it, Heyling, do it, but save my boy; he is so young, Heyling, so young to die!"

"Listen," said the stranger, grasping the old man fiercely by the wrist: "I will have life for life, and here is *ONE*. My child died, before his father's eyes, a far more agonizing and painful death than that young slanderer of his sister's worth is meeting while I speak. You laughed—laughed in your daughter's face, where death had already set his hand—at our sufferings, then. What do you think of them now? See there, see there!"

"As the stranger spoke, he pointed to the sea. A faint cry died away upon its surface; the last powerful struggle of the dying man agitated the rippling waves for a few seconds: and the spot where he had gone down into his early grave was indistinguishable from the surrounding water.

"Three years had elapsed, when a gentleman alighted from a private carriage at the door of a London attorney, then well known as a man of no great nicety in his professional dealings; and requested a private interview on business of importance. Although evidently not past the prime of life, his face was pale, haggard, and dejected; and it did

not require the acute perception of the man of business, to discern at a glance that disease or suffering had done more to work a change in his appearance than the mere hand of time could have accomplished in twice the period of his whole life.

"I wish you to undertake some legal business for me," said the stranger.

"The attorney bowed obsequiously, and glanced at a large packet which the gentleman carried in his hand. His visitor observed the look, and proceeded:

"It is no common business," said he, "nor have these papers reached my hands without long trouble and great expense."

"The attorney cast a still more anxious look at the packet; and his visitor, untying the string that bound it, disclosed a quantity of promissory notes, with copies of deeds, and other documents.

"Upon these papers," said the client, "the man whose name they bear has raised, as you will see, large sums of money, for some years past. There was a tacit understanding between him and the men into whose hands they originally went—and from whom I have by degrees purchased the whole, for treble and quadruple their nominal value—that these loans should be from time to time renewed, until a given period had elapsed. Such an understanding is nowhere expressed. He has sustained many losses of late; and these obligations accumulating upon him at once would crush him to the earth."

"The whole amount is many thousands of pounds," said the attorney, looking over the papers.

"It is," said the client.

"What are we to do?" inquired the man of business.

"Do!" replied the client, with sudden vehemence. "Put every engine of the law in force, every trick that ingenuity can devise and rascality execute; fair means and foul; the open oppression of

the law, aided by all the craft of its most ingenious practitioners. I would have him die a harassing and lingering death. Ruin him, seize and sell his lands and goods, drive him from house and home, and drag him forth a beggar in his old age, to die in a common jail.'

"'But the costs, my dear sir, the costs of all this,' reasoned the attorney, when he had recovered from his momentary surprise. 'If the defendant be a man of straw, who is to pay the costs, sir?'"

"'Name any sum,' said the stranger, his hand trembling so violently with excitement that he could scarcely hold the pen he seized as he spoke; 'any sum, and it is yours. Don't be afraid to name it, man. I shall not think it dear, if you gain my object.'

"The attorney named a large sum, at hazard, as the advance he should require to secure himself against the possibility of loss; but more with the view of ascertaining how far his client was really disposed to go, than with any idea that he would comply with the demand. The stranger wrote a check upon his banker, for the whole amount, and left him.

"The draft was duly honored, and the attorney, finding that his strange client might be safely relied upon, commenced his work in earnest. For more than two years afterwards, Mr. Heyling would sit whole days together, in the office, poring over the papers as they accumulated, and reading again and again, his eyes gleaming with joy, the letters of remonstrance, the prayers for a little delay, the representations of the certain ruin in which the opposite party must be involved, which poured in, as suit after suit, and process after process, was commenced. To all applications for a brief indulgence, there was but one reply—the money must be paid. Land, house, furniture, each in its turn, was taken under some one of the numerous executions which were issued; and the old man himself would have been immured in prison

had he not escaped the vigilance of the officers, and fled.

"The implacable animosity of Heyling, so far from being satiated by the success of his persecution, increased a hundredfold with the ruin he inflicted. On being informed of the old man's flight, his fury was unbounded. He gnashed his teeth with rage; tore the hair from his head, and assailed with horrid imprecations the men who had been intrusted with the writ. He was only restored to comparative calmness by repeated assurances of the certainty of discovering the fugitive. Agents were sent in quest of him, in all directions; every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to, for the purpose of discovering his place of retreat; but it was all in vain. Half a year had passed over, and he was still undiscovered.

"At length, late one night, Heyling, of whom nothing had been seen for many weeks before, appeared at his attorney's private residence, and sent up word that a gentleman wished to see him instantly. Before the attorney, who had recognized his voice from above stairs, could order the servant to admit him, he had rushed up the staircase, and entered the drawing-room, pale and breathless. Having closed the door, to prevent being overheard, he sank into a chair, and said, in a low voice:

"'Hush! I have found him at last.'

"'No!' said the attorney. 'Well done, my dear sir; well done.'

"'He lies concealed in a wretched lodging in Camden Town,' said Heyling. 'Perhaps it is as well we *did* lose sight of him, for he has been living alone there, in the most abject misery, all the time, and he is poor—very poor.'

"'Very good,' said the attorney. 'You will have the capture made to-morrow, of course?'"

"'Yes,' replied Heyling. "Stay! No! The next day. You are surprised at my wishing to postpone it,' he added, with

a ghastly smile; 'but I had forgotten. The next day is an anniversary in his life: let it be done then.'

"'Very good,' said the attorney. 'Will you write down instructions for the officer?'

"'No; let him meet me here, at eight in the evening, and I will accompany him myself.'

"They met on the appointed night, and, hiring a hackney coach, directed the driver to stop at that corner of the old Pancras Road, at which stands the parish workhouse. By the time they alighted there, it was quite dark; and, proceeding by the dead wall in front of the Veterinary Hospital, they entered a small by-street, which is, or was at that time, called Little College Street, and which, whatever it may be now, was in those days a desolate place enough, surrounded by little else than fields and ditches.

"Having drawn the traveling cap he had on half over his face, and muffled himself in his cloak, Heyling stopped before the meanest-looking house in the street, and knocked gently at the door. It was at once opened by a woman, who dropped a curtsy of recognition, and Heyling, whispering the officer to remain below, crept gently upstairs, and, opening the door of the front room, entered at once.

"The object of his search and his unrelenting animosity, now a decrepit old man, was seated at a bare deal table, on which stood a miserable candle. He started on the entrance of the stranger, and rose feebly to his feet.

"'What now, what now?' said the old man. 'What fresh misery is this? What do you want here?'

"'A word with *you*,' replied Heyling. As he spoke, he seated himself at the other end of the table, and, throwing off his cloak and cap, disclosed his features.

"The old man seemed instantly deprived of the power of speech. He fell backward in his chair, and, clasping his hands together, gazed on the apparition with a mingled look of abhorrence and fear.

"'This day six years,' said Heyling, 'I claimed the life you owed me for my child's. Beside the lifeless form of your daughter, old man, I swore to live a life of revenge. I have never swerved from my purpose for a moment's space; but if I had, one thought of her uncomplaining, suffering look, as she drooped away, or of the starving face of our innocent child, would have nerved me to my task. My first act of requital you well remember: this is my last.'

"The old man shivered, and his hands dropped powerless by his side.

"'I leave England to-morrow,' said Heyling, after a moment's pause. 'To-night I consign you to the living death to which you devoted her—a hopeless prison—'

"He raised his eyes to the old man's countenance, and paused. He lifted the light to his face, set it gently down, and left the apartment.

"'You had better see to the old man,' he said to the woman, as he opened the door and motioned the officer to follow him into the street. 'I think he is ill.' The woman closed the door, ran hastily upstairs, and found him lifeless.

"Beneath a plain gravestone, in one of the most peaceful and secluded churchyards in Kent, where wild flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around forms the fairest spot in the garden of England, lie the bones of the young mother and her gentle child. But the ashes of the father do not mingle with theirs; nor, from that night forward, did the attorney ever gain the remotest clew to the subsequent history of his queer client."

by
E. W. Hornung

Author of



*'Willful Murder'
and 'The
Return Match'*

The Gift of the Emperor

WHEN the King of the Cannibal Islands made faces at Queen Victoria, and a European monarch set the cables tingling with his compliments on the exploit, the indignation in England was not less than the surprise, for the thing was not so common as it has since become. But when it transpired that a gift of peculiar significance was to follow the congratulations, to give them weight, the inference prevailed that the white potentate and the black had taken simultaneous leave of their fourteen senses. For the gift was a pearl of price unparalleled, picked aforetime by British cutlasses from a Polynesian setting, and presented by British royalty to the sovereign who seized this opportunity of restoring it to its original possessor.

The incident would have been a god-send to the press a few weeks later. Even in June there were leaders, letters, large headlines, leaded type; the *Daily Chronicle* devoting half its lit-

erary page to a charming drawing of the island capital which the new *Pall Mall*, in a leading article headed by a pun, advised the government to blow to flinders. I was myself driving a poor but not dishonest quill at the time, and the topic of the hour goaded me into satiric verse which obtained a better place than anything I had yet turned out. I had let my flat in town, and taken inexpensive quarters at Thames Ditton, on the plea of a disinterested passion for the river.

"First-rate, old boy!" said Raffles—who must needs come and see me there—lying back in the boat while I sculled and steered. "I suppose they pay you pretty well for these, eh?"

"Not a penny."

"Nonsense, Bunny! I thought they paid so well! Give them time, and you'll get your check."

"Oh, no, I shan't," said I gloomily. "I've got to be content with the honor of getting in; the editor wrote to say

so, in so many words," I added. But I gave the gentleman his distinguished name.

"You don't mean to say you've written for payment already?"

No; it was the last thing I had intended to admit. But I had done it. The murder was out; there was no sense in further concealment. I had written for my money because I really needed it; if he must know, I was cursedly hard up. Raffles nodded as though he knew already. I warmed to my woes. It was no easy matter to keep your end up as a raw free lance of letters; for my part, I was afraid I wrote neither well enough nor ill enough for success. I suffered from a persistent, ineffectual feeling after style. Verse I could manage; but it did not pay. To personal paragraphs and the baser journalism I could not and I would not stoop.

Raffles nodded again, this time with a smile that stayed in his eyes as he leaned back watching me. I knew that he was thinking of other things I had stooped to, and I thought I knew what he was going to say. He had said it before so often; he was sure to say it again. I had my answer ready, but evidently he was tired of asking the same question. His lids fell, he took up the paper he had dropped, and I sculled the length of the old red wall of Hampton Court before he spoke again.

"And they gave you nothing for these! My dear Bunny, they're capital, not only as verses but for crystallizing your subject and putting it in a nutshell. Certainly you've taught *me* more about it than I knew before. But is it really worth fifty thousand pounds—a single pearl?"

"A hundred, I believe; but that wouldn't scan."

"A hundred thousand pounds!" said Raffles, with his eyes shut. And again I made certain what was coming, but

again I was mistaken. "If it's worth all that," he cried at last, "there would be no getting rid of it at all; it's not like a diamond that you can subdivide. But I beg your pardon, Bunny. I was forgetting!"

And we said no more about the emperor's gift; for pride thrives on an empty pocket, and no privation would have drawn from me the proposal which I had expected Raffles to make. My expectation had been half a hope, though I only knew it now. But neither did we touch again on what Raffles professed to have forgotten—my "apostasy," my "lapse into virtue," as he had been pleased to call it. We were both a little silent, a little constrained, each preoccupied with his own thoughts. It was months since we had met, and, as I saw him off toward eleven o'clock that Sunday night, I fancied it was for more months that we were saying good-by.

But as we waited for the train I saw those clear eyes peering at me under the station lamps, and when I met their glance Raffles shook his head.

"You don't look well on it, Bunny," said he. "I never did believe in this Thames valley. You want a change of air."

I wished I might get it.

"What you really want is a sea voyage."

"And a winter at St. Moritz, or do you recommend Cannes or Cairo? It's all very well, A. J., but you forget what I told you about my funds."

"I forget nothing. I merely don't want to hurt your feelings. But, look here, a sea voyage you shall have. I want a change myself, and you shall come with me as my guest. We'll spend July in the Mediterranean."

"But you're playing cricket——"

"Hang the cricket!"

"Well, if I thought you meant it——"

"Of course I mean it. Will you come?"

"Like a shot—if you go."

And I shook his hand, and waved mine in farewell, with the perfectly good-humored conviction that I should hear no more of the matter. It was a passing thought, no more, no less. I soon wished it were more; that week found me wishing myself out of England for good and all. I was making nothing. I could but subsist on the difference between the rent I paid for my flat and the rent at which I had sublet it, furnished, for the season. And the season was near its end, and creditors awaited me in town. Was it possible to be entirely honest? I had run no bills when I had money in my pocket, and the more downright dishonesty seemed to me the less ignoble.

But from Raffles, of course, I heard nothing more; a week went by, and half another week; then, late on the second Wednesday night, I found a telegram from him at my lodgings, after seeking him vainly in town, and dining with desperation at the solitary club to which I still belonged.

Arrange to leave Waterloo by North German Lloyd special 9.25 a. m. Monday next will meet you Southampton aboard *Uhlán* with tickets am writing.

And write he did, a light-hearted letter enough, but full of serious solicitude for me and for my health and prospects; a letter almost touching in the light of our past relations, in the twilight of their complete rupture. He said that he had booked two berths to Naples, that we were bound for Capri, which was clearly the Island of the Lotos-eaters, that we would bask there together, "and for a while forget." It was a charming letter. I had never seen Italy; the privilege of initiation should be his. No mistake was greater than to deem it an impossible country for the summer. The Bay of Naples was never so divine, and he wrote of "faërylands forlorn," as though the poetry sprang unbidden to his pen. To come back to

earth and prose, I might think it unpatriotic of him to choose a German boat, but on no other line did you receive such attention and accommodation for your money. There was a hint of better reasons. Raffles wrote, as he had telegraphed, from Bremen; and I gathered that the personal use of some little influence with the authorities there had resulted in a material reduction in our fares.

Imagine my excitement and delight! I managed to pay what I owed at Thames Ditton, to squeeze a small editor for a very small check, and my tailors for one more flannel suit. I remember that I broke my last sovereign to get a box of Sullivan's cigarettes for Raffles to smoke on the voyage. But my heart was as light as my purse on the Monday morning, the fairest morning of an unfair summer, when the special whirled me through the sunshine to the sea.

A tender awaited us at Southampton. Raffles was not on board, nor did I really look for him till we reached the liner's side. And then I looked in vain. His face was not among the many that fringed the rail; his hand was not of the few that waved to friends. I climbed aboard in a sudden heaviness. I had no ticket, nor the money to pay for one. I did not even know the number of my room. My heart was in my mouth as I waylaid a steward and asked if a Mr. Raffles was on board. Thank heaven—he was! But where? The man did not know, was plainly on some other errand, and a-hunting I must go. But there was no sign of him on the promenade deck, and none below in the saloon; the smoking room was empty but for a little German with a red mustache twisted into his eyes; nor was Raffles in his own cabin, whither I inquired my way in desperation, but where the sight of his own name on the baggage was certainly a further reassurance. Why he himself kept in the

background, however, I could not conceive, and only sinister reasons would suggest themselves in explanation.

"So there you are! I've been looking for you all over the ship!"

Despite the graven prohibition, I had tried the bridge as a last resort; and there, indeed, was A. J. Raffles, seated on a skylight, and leaning over one of the officers' long chairs, in which reclined a girl in a white drill coat and skirt—a slip of a girl with a pale skin, dark hair, and rather remarkable eyes. So much I noted as he rose and quickly turned; thereupon I could think of nothing but the swift grimace which preceded a start of well-feigned astonishment.

"Why—Bunny!" cried Raffles. "Where have you sprung from?"

I stammered something as he pinched my hand.

"And are you coming in this ship? And to Naples, too? Well, upon my word! Miss Werner, may I introduce him?"

And he did so without a blush, describing me as an old schoolfellow whom he had not seen for months, with willful circumstance and gratuitous detail that filled me at once with confusion, suspicion, and revolt. I felt myself blushing for us both, and I did not care. My address utterly deserted me, and I made no effort to recover it, to carry the thing off. All I would do was to mumble such words as Raffles actually put into my mouth, and that I doubt not with a thoroughly evil grace.

"So you saw my name in the list of passengers and came in search of me? Good old Bunny! I say, though, I wish you'd share my cabin! I've got a beauty on the promenade deck, but they wouldn't promise to keep me by myself. We ought to see about it before they shove in some alien. In any case we shall have to get out of this."

For a quartermaster had entered the wheel house, and even while we had

been speaking the pilot had taken possession of the bridge; as we descended, the tender left us with flying handkerchiefs and shrill good-bys; and as we bowed to Miss Werner on the promenade deck, there came a deep, slow throbbing underfoot, and our voyage had begun.

It did not begin pleasantly between Raffles and me. On deck he had overborne my stubborn perplexity by dint of a forced though forceful joviality; in his cabin the gloves were off.

"You idiot," he snarled, "you've given me away again!"

"How have I given you away?"

I ignored the separate insult in his last word.

"How? I should have thought any clod could see that I meant us to meet by chance!"

"After taking both tickets yourself?"

"They know nothing about that on board; besides, I hadn't decided when I took the tickets."

"Then you should have let me know when you did decide. You lay your plans, and never say a word, and expect me to tumble to them by light of nature. How was I to know you had anything on?"

I had turned the tables with some effect. Raffles almost hung his head.

"The fact is, Bunny, I didn't mean you to know. You—you've grown such a pious rabbit in your old age!"

My nickname and his tone went far to mollify me, other things went farther, but I had much to forgive him still.

"If you were afraid of writing," I pursued, "it was your business to give me the tip the moment I set foot on board. I would have taken it all right. I am not so virtuous as all that."

Was it my imagination, or did Raffles look slightly ashamed? If so, it was for the first and last time in all the years I knew him; nor can I swear to it even now.

"That," said he, "was the very thing

I meant to do—to lie in wait in my room and get you as you passed. But——”

“You were better engaged?”

“Say otherwise.”

“The charming Miss Werner?”

“She is quite charming.”

“Most Australian girls are,” said I.

“How did you know she was one?” he cried.

“I heard her speak.”

“Brute!” said Raffles, laughing. “She has no more twang than you have. Her people are German, she has been to school in Dresden, and is on her way out alone.”

“Money?” I inquired.

“Confound you!” he said, and, though he was laughing, I thought it was a point at which the subject might be changed.

“Well,” I said, “it wasn’t for Miss Werner you wanted us to play strangers, was it? You have some deeper game than that, eh?”

“I suppose I have.”

“Then hadn’t you better tell me what it is?”

Raffles treated me to the old, cautious scrutiny that I knew so well; the very familiarity of it, after all these months, set me smiling in a way that might have reassured him; for dimly already I divined his enterprise.

“It won’t send you off in the pilot’s boat, Bunny?”

“Not quite.”

“Then—you remember the pearl you wrote the——”

I did not wait for him to finish his sentence.

“You’ve got it!” I cried, my face on fire, for I caught sight of it that moment in the stateroom mirror.

Raffles seemed taken aback.

“Not yet,” said he; “but I mean to have it before we get to Naples.”

“It is on board?”

“Yes.”

“But how—where—who’s got it?”

“A little German officer, a whippersnapper with perpendicular mustaches.”

“I saw him in the smoke room.”

“That’s the chap; he’s always there. Herr Captain Wilhelm von Heumann, if you look in the list. Well, he’s the special envoy of the emperor, and he’s taking the pearl out with him!”

“You found this out in Bremen?”

“No, in Berlin, from a newspaper man I know there. I’m ashamed to tell you, Bunny, that I went there on purpose!”

I burst out laughing.

“You needn’t be ashamed. You are doing the very thing I was rather hoping you were going to propose the other day on the river.”

“You were *hoping* it?” said Raffles, with his eyes wide open. Indeed, it was his turn to show surprise, and mine to be much more ashamed than I felt.

“Yes,” I answered; “I was quite keen on the idea, but I wasn’t going to propose it.”

“Yet you would have listened to me the other day?”

Certainly I would, and I told him so without reserve; not brazenly, you understand; not even now with the gusto of a man who savors such an adventure for its own sake, but doggedly, defiantly, through my teeth, as one who had tried to live honestly and failed. And, while I was about it, I told him much more. Eloquently enough, I dare say, I gave him chapter and verse of my hopeless struggle, my inevitable defeat; for hopeless and inevitable they were to a man with my record, even though that record was written only in one’s own soul. It was the old story of the thief trying to turn honest man; the thing was against nature, and there was an end of it.

Raffles entirely disagreed with me. He shook his head over my conventional view. Human nature was a board of checkers; why not reconcile oneself to alternate black and white?

Why desire to be all one thing or all the other, like our forefathers on the stage or in the old-fashioned fiction? For his part, he enjoyed himself on all squares of the board, and liked the light the better for the shade. My conclusion he considered absurd.

"But you err in good company, Bunny, for all the cheap moralists who preach the same twaddle: old Virgil was the first and worst offender of you all. I back myself to climb out of Avernus any day I like, and sooner or later I shall climb out for good. I suppose I can't very well turn myself into a Limited Liability Company. But I could retire and settle down and live blamelessly ever after. I'm not sure that it couldn't be done on this pearl alone!"

"Then you don't still think it too remarkable to sell?"

"We might take a fishery and haul it up with smaller fry. It would come after months of ill luck, just as we were going to sell the schooner; by Jove, it would be the talk of the Pacific!"

"Well, we've got to get it first. Is this Von What's-his-name a formidable cuss?"

"More so than he looks; and he has the cheek of the devil!"

As he spoke a white drill skirt fluttered past the open stateroom door, and I caught a glimpse of an upturned mustache beyond.

"But he is the chap we have to deal with? Won't the pearl be in the pursuer's keeping?"

Raffles stood at the door, frowning out upon the Scalent, but for an instant he turned to me with a sniff.

"My good fellow, do you suppose the whole ship's company knows there's a gem like that aboard? You said that it was worth a hundred thousand pounds; in Berlin they say it's priceless. I doubt if the skipper himself knows that Von Heumann has it on him."

"And he has?"

"Must have."

"Then we have only him to deal with?"

He answered me without a word. Something white was fluttering past once more, and Raffles, stepping forth, made the promenaders three.

I do not ask to set foot aboard a finer steamship than the *Uhlau* of the Norddeutscher Lloyd, to meet a kinder gentleman than her then commander, or better fellows than his officers. This much at least let me have the grace to admit. I hated the voyage. It was no fault of anybody connected with the ship; it was no fault of the weather, which was monotonously ideal. Not even in my own heart did the reason reside; conscience and I were divorced at last, and the decree made absolute. With my scruples had fled all fear, and I was ready to revel between bright skies and sparkling sea with the light-hearted detachment of Raffles himself. It was Raffles who prevented me, but not Raffles alone. It was Raffles and that colonial minx on her way home from school.

What he could see in her—but that begs the question. Of course he saw no more than I did, but to annoy me, or perhaps to punish me for my long defection, he must turn his back on me and devote himself to this chit from Southampton to the Mediterranean. They were always together. It was too absurd. After breakfast they would begin, and go on until eleven or twelve at night; there was no intervening hour at which you might not hear her nasal laugh, or his quiet voice talking soft nonsense into her ear. Of course it was nonsense! Is it conceivable that a man like Raffles, with his knowledge of the world, and his experience of women—a side of his character upon which I have purposely never touched, for it deserves another volume—is it credible, I ask, that such a man could find

anything but nonsense to talk by the day together to a giddy young school-girl? I would not be unfair for the world. I think I have admitted that the young person had points. Her eyes, I suppose, were really fine, and certainly the shape of the little brown face was charming, so far as mere contour can charm. I admit also more audacity than I cared about, with enviable health, mettle, and vitality. I may not have occasion to report any of this young lady's speeches—they would scarcely bear it—and am therefore the more anxious to describe her without injustice. I confess to some little prejudice against her. I resented her success with Raffles, of whom, in consequence, I saw less and less each day. It is a mean thing to have to confess, but there must have been something not unlike jealousy rankling within me.

Jealousy there was in another quarter—crude, rampant, undignified jealousy. Captain von Heumann would twirl his mustaches into twin spires, shoot his white cuffs over his rings, and stare at me insolently through his rimless eyeglasses; we ought to have consoled each other, but we never exchanged a syllable. The captain had a murderous scar across one of his cheeks, a present from Heidelberg, and I used to think how he must long to have Raffles there to serve the same. It was not as though Von Heumann never had his innings. Raffles let him go in several times a day for the malicious pleasure of bowling him out as he was "getting set." Those were his words when I taxed him disingenuously with obnoxious conduct toward a German on a German boat.

"You'll make yourself disliked on board!"

"By Von Heumann merely."

"But is that wise when he's the man we've got to diddle?"

"The wisest thing I ever did. To

have chummed up with him would have been fatal—the common dodge."

I was consoled, encouraged, almost content. I had feared Raffles was neglecting things, and I told him so in a burst. Here we were near Gibraltar, and not a word since the Solent. He shook his head with a smile.

"Plenty of time, Bunny, plenty of time. We can do nothing before we get to Genoa, and that won't be till Sunday night. The voyage is still young, and so are we; let's make the most of things while we can."

It was after dinner on the promenade deck, and as Raffles spoke he glanced sharply fore and aft, leaving me next moment with a step full of purpose. I retired to the smoking room, to smoke and read in a corner, and to watch Von Heumann, who very soon came to drink beer and to sulk in another.

Few travelers tempt the Red Sea at midsummer; the *Uhlán* was very empty indeed. She had, however, but a limited supply of cabins on the promenade deck, and there was just that excuse for my sharing Raffles' room. I could have had one to myself, downstairs, but I must be up above. Raffles had insisted that I should insist on the point. So we were together, I think, without suspicion, though also without any object that I could see.

On the Sunday afternoon I was asleep in my berth—the lower one—when the curtains were shaken by Raffles, who was in his shirt sleeves on the settee.

"Achilles sulking in his bunk!"

"What else is there to do?" I asked him as I stretched and yawned. I noted, however, the good humor of his tone, and did my best to catch it.

"I have found something else, Bunny."

"I dare say!"

"You misunderstand me. The whippersnapper's making his century this afternoon. I've had other fish to fry."

I swung my legs over the side of my berth and sat forward, as he was sitting, all attention. The inner door, a grating, was shut and bolted, and curtained like the open porthole.

"We shall be at Genoa before sunset," continued Raffles. "It's the place where the deed's got to be done."

"So you still mean to do it!"

"Did I ever say I didn't?"

"You have said so little either way."

"Advisedly so, my dear Bunny; why spoil a pleasure trip by talking unnecessary shop? But now the time has come. It must be done at Genoa or not at all."

"On land?"

"No, on board, to-morrow night. To-night would do, but to-morrow is better, in case of mishap. If we were forced to use violence we could get away by the earliest train, and nothing be known till the ship was sailing and Von Heumann found dead or drugged——"

"Not dead!" I exclaimed.

"Of course not," assented Raffles, "or there would be no need for us to bolt; but if we should have to bolt, Tuesday morning is our time, when this ship has got to sail, whatever happens. But I don't anticipate any violence. Violence is a confession of terrible incompetence. In all these years how many blows have you known me to strike? Not one, I believe; but I have been quite ready to kill my man every time, if the worst came to the worst."

I asked him how he proposed to enter Von Heumann's stateroom unobserved, and even through the curtained gloom of ours his face lighted up.

"Climb into my bunk, Bunny, and you shall see."

I did so, but could see nothing. Raffles reached across me and tapped the ventilator, a sort of trapdoor in the wall above his bed, some eighteen inches long and half that height. It

opened outward into the ventilating shaft.

"That," said he, "is our door to fortune. Open it if you like; you won't see much, because it doesn't open far; but loosening a couple of screws will set that all right. The shaft, as you may see, is more or less bottomless; you pass under it whenever you go to your bath, and the top is a skylight on the bridge. That's why this thing has to be done while we're at Genoa, because they keep no watch on the bridge in port. The ventilator opposite ours is Von Heumann's. It again will only mean a couple of screws, and there's a beam to stand on while you work."

"But if anybody should look up from below?"

"It's extremely unlikely that anybody will be astir below—so unlikely that we can afford to chance it. No, I can't have you there to make sure. The great point is that neither of us should be seen from the time we turn in. A couple of ship's boys do sentry-go on these decks, and they shall be our witnesses; by Jove, it'll be the biggest mystery that ever was made!"

"If Von Heumann doesn't resist."

"Resist! He won't get the chance. He drinks too much beer to sleep light, and nothing is so easy as to chloroform a heavy sleeper; you've even done it yourself on an occasion of which it's perhaps unfair to remind you. Von Heumann will be past sensation almost as soon as I get my hand through his ventilator. I shall crawl in over his body, Bunny, my boy!"

"And I?"

"You will hand me what I want, and hold the fort in case of accidents, and generally lend me the moral support you've made me require. It's a luxury, Bunny, but I found it devilish difficult to do without it after you turned pi!"

He said that Von Heumann was certain to sleep with a bolted door, which he, of course, would leave unbolted, and

spoke of other ways of laying a false scent while rifling the cabin. Not that Raffles anticipated a tiresome search. The pearl would be about Von Heumann's person; in fact, Raffles knew exactly where and in what he kept it. Naturally I asked how he could have come by such knowledge, and his answer led up to a momentary unpleasantness.

"It's a very old story, Bunny. I really forget in what book it comes; I'm only sure of the Testament. But Samson was the unlucky hero, and one Delilah the heroine."

And he looked so knowing that I could not be in a moment's doubt as to his meaning.

"So the fair Australian has been playing Delilah?" said I.

"In a very harmless, innocent sort of way."

"She got his mission out of him?"

"Yes; I've forced him to score all the points he could, and that was his great stroke, as I hoped it would be. He has even shown Amy the pearl."

"Amy, eh? And she promptly told you?"

"Nothing of the kind. What makes you think so? I had the greatest trouble in getting it out of her."

His tone should have been a sufficient warning to me. I had not the tact to take it as such. At last I knew the meaning of his furious flirtation, and stood wagging my head and shaking my finger, blinded to his frowns by my own enlightenment.

"Wily worm!" said I. "Now I see through it all; how dense I've been!"

"Sure you're not still?"

"No; now I understand what has beaten me all the week. I simply couldn't fathom what you saw in that little girl. I never dreamed it was part of the game."

"So you think it was that and nothing more?"

"You deep old dog—of course I do!"

"You didn't know she was the daughter of a wealthy squatter?"

"There are wealthy women by the dozen who would marry you to-morrow."

"It doesn't occur to you that I might like to draw stumps, start clean, and live happily ever after—in the bush?"

"With that voice? It certainly does not!"

"Bunny!" he cried, so fiercely that I braced myself for a blow.

But no more followed.

"Do you think you would live happily?" I made bold to ask him.

"God knows!" he answered. And with that he left me, to marvel at his look and tone, and, more than ever, at the insufficiently exciting cause.

Of all the mere feats of cracksmanship which I have seen Raffles perform, at once the most delicate and most difficult was that which he accomplished between one and two o'clock on the Tuesday morning, aboard the North German steamer *Uhlan*, lying at anchor in Genoa harbor.

Not a hitch occurred. Everything had been foreseen; everything happened as I had been assured everything must. Nobody was about below, only the ship's boys on deck, and nobody on the bridge. It was twenty-five minutes past one when Raffles, without a stitch of clothing on his body, but with a glass vial, corked with cotton wool, between his teeth, and a tiny screwdriver behind his ear, squirmed feet first through the ventilator over his berth; and it was nineteen minutes to two when he returned, head first, with the vial still between his teeth, and the cotton wool rammed home to still the rattling of that which lay like a great gray bean within. He had taken screws out and put them in again; he had unfastened Von Heumann's ventilator and had left it fast as he had found it—fast as he instantly proceeded to make his own.

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"Not dead!" I exclaimed.

"Of course not," assented Raffles, "or there would be no need for us to bolt; but if we should have to bolt, Tuesday morning is our time, when this ship has got to sail, whatever happens. But I don't anticipate any violence. Violence is a confession of terrible incompetence. In all these years how many blows have you known me to strike? Not one, I believe; but I have been quite ready to kill my man every time, if the worst came to the worst."

I asked him how he proposed to enter Von Heumann's stateroom unobserved, and even through the curtained gloom of ours his face lighted up.

"Climb into my bunk, Bunny, and you shall see."

I did so, but could see nothing. Raffles reached across me and tapped the ventilator, a sort of trapdoor in the wall above his bed, some eighteen inches long and half that height. It

opened outward into the ventilating shaft.

"That," said he, "is our door to fortune. Open it if you like; you won't see much, because it doesn't open far; but loosening a couple of screws will set that all right. The shaft, as you may see, is more or less bottomless; you pass under it whenever you go to your bath, and the top is a skylight on the bridge. That's why this thing has to be done while we're at Genoa, because they keep no watch on the bridge in port. The ventilator opposite ours is Von Heumann's. It again will only mean a couple of screws, and there's a beam to stand on while you work."

"But if anybody should look up from below?"

"It's extremely unlikely that anybody will be astir below—so unlikely that we can afford to chance it. No, I can't have you there to make sure. The great point is that neither of us should be seen from the time we turn in. A couple of ship's boys do sentry-go on these decks, and they shall be our witnesses; by Jove, it'll be the biggest mystery that ever was made!"

"If Von Heumann doesn't resist."

"Resist! He won't get the chance. He drinks too much beer to sleep light, and nothing is so easy as to chloroform a heavy sleeper; you've even done it yourself on an occasion of which it's perhaps unfair to remind you. Von Heumann will be past sensation almost as soon as I get my hand through his ventilator. I shall crawl in over his body, Bunny, my boy!"

"And I?"

"You will hand me what I want, and hold the fort in case of accidents, and generally lend me the moral support you've made me require. It's a luxury, Bunny, but I found it devilish difficult to do without it after you turned pi!"

He said that Von Heumann was certain to sleep with a bolted door, which he, of course, would leave unbolted, and

spoke of other ways of laying a false scent while rifling the cabin. Not that Raffles anticipated a tiresome search. The pearl would be about Von Heumann's person; in fact, Raffles knew exactly where and in what he kept it. Naturally I asked how he could have come by such knowledge, and his answer led up to a momentary unpleasantness.

"It's a very old story, Bunny. I really forget in what book it comes; I'm only sure of the Testament. But Samson was the unlucky hero, and one Delilah the heroine."

And he looked so knowing that I could not be in a moment's doubt as to his meaning.

"So the fair Australian has been playing Delilah?" said I.

"In a very harmless, innocent sort of way."

"She got his mission out of him?"

"Yes; I've forced him to score all the points he could, and that was his great stroke, as I hoped it would be. He has even shown Amy the pearl."

"Amy, eh? And she promptly told you?"

"Nothing of the kind. What makes you think so? I had the greatest trouble in getting it out of her."

His tone should have been a sufficient warning to me. I had not the tact to take it as such. At last I knew the meaning of his furious flirtation, and stood wagging my head and shaking my finger, blinded to his frowns by my own enlightenment.

"Wily worm!" said I. "Now I see through it all; how dense I've been!"

"Sure you're not still?"

"No; now I understand what has beaten me all the week. I simply couldn't fathom what you saw in that little girl. I never dreamed it was part of the game."

"So you think it was that and nothing more?"

"You deep old dog—of course I do!"

"You didn't know she was the daughter of a wealthy squatter?"

"There are wealthy women by the dozen who would marry you to-morrow."

"It doesn't occur to you that I might like to draw stumps, start clean, and live happily ever after—in the bush?"

"With that voice? It certainly does not!"

"Bunny!" he cried, so fiercely that I braced myself for a blow.

But no more followed.

"Do you think you would live happily?" I made bold to ask him.

"God knows!" he answered. And with that he left me, to marvel at his look and tone, and, more than ever, at the insufficiently exciting cause.

Of all the mere feats of cracksmanship which I have seen Raffles perform, at once the most delicate and most difficult was that which he accomplished between one and two o'clock on the Tuesday morning, aboard the North German steamer *Uhlán*, lying at anchor in Genoa harbor.

Not a hitch occurred. Everything had been foreseen; everything happened as I had been assured everything must. Nobody was about below, only the ship's boys on deck, and nobody on the bridge. It was twenty-five minutes past one when Raffles, without a stitch of clothing on his body, but with a glass vial, corked with cotton wool, between his teeth, and a tiny screwdriver behind his ear, squirmed feet first through the ventilator over his berth; and it was nineteen minutes to two when he returned, head first, with the vial still between his teeth, and the cotton wool rammed home to still the rattling of that which lay like a great gray bean within. He had taken screws out and put them in again; he had unfastened Von Heumann's ventilator and had left it fast as he had found it—fast as he instantly proceeded to make his own.

As for Von Heumann, it had been enough to place the drenched wad first on his mustache, and then to hold it between his gaping lips; thereafter the intruder had climbed both ways across his shins without eliciting a groan.

And here was the prize—this pearl as large as a filbert—with a pale-pink tinge like a lady's finger nail—this spoil of a filibustering age—this gift from a European emperor to a South Sea chief. We gloated over it when all was snug. We toasted it in whisky and soda water laid in overnight in view of the great moment. But the moment was greater, more triumphant, than our most sanguine dreams. All we had now to do was to secrete the gem—which Raffles had prized from its setting, replacing the latter—so that we could stand the strictest search and yet take it ashore with us at Naples; and this Raffles was doing when I turned in. I myself would have landed incontinently, that night, at Genoa and bolted with the spoil; he would not hear of it, for a dozen good reasons which will be obvious.

On the whole I do not think that anything was discovered or suspected before we weighed anchor; but I cannot be sure. It is difficult to believe that a man could be chloroformed in his sleep and feel no telltale effects, sniff no suspicious odor in the morning. Nevertheless, Von Heumann reappeared as though nothing had happened to him, his German cap over his eyes and his mustaches brushing the peak. And by ten o'clock we were quit of Genoa; the last, lean, blue-chinned official had left our decks; the last fruit seller had been beaten off with bucketfuls of water and left cursing us from his boat; the last passenger had come aboard at the last moment—a fussy graybeard who kept the big ship waiting while he haggled with his boatman over half a lira. But at length we were off, the tug was shed, the lighthouse passed, and Raffles and

I leaned together over the rail, watching our shadows on the pale-green, liquid, veined marble that again washed the vessel's side.

Von Heumann was having his innings once more; it was part of the design that he should remain in all day, and so postpone the inevitable hour; and, though the lady looked bored, and was for ever glancing in our direction, he seemed only too willing to avail himself of his opportunities. But Raffles was moody and ill at ease. He had not the air of a successful man. I could but opine that the impending parting at Naples sat heavily on his spirit.

He would neither talk to me, nor would he let me go.

"Stop where you are, Bunny. I've things to tell you. Can you swim?"

"A bit."

"Ten miles?"

"Ten?" I burst out laughing. "Not one! Why do you ask?"

"We shall be within a ten-miles' swim of the shore most of the day."

"What on earth are you driving at, Raffles?"

"Nothing; only I shall swim for it if the worst comes to the worst. I suppose you can't swim under water at all?"

I did not answer his question. I scarcely heard it: cold beads were bursting through my skin.

"Why should the worst come to the worst?" I whispered. "We aren't found out, are we?"

"No."

"Then why speak as though we were?"

"We may be; an old enemy of ours is on board."

"An old enemy?"

"Mackenzie."

"Never!"

"The man with the beard who came aboard last."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure! I didn't rec-

I took now that something gait, as v-ful for beard se-I recalled rible rev- the deck to be se-

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"But I cried r- dence-i-

Raffle "Har- "Ther- "I've weeks."

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"Sure! I was only sorry to see you didn't recognize him too."

I took my handkerchief to my face; now that I thought of it, there had been something familiar in the old man's gait, as well as something rather youthful for his apparent years; his very beard seemed unconvincing, now that I recalled it in the light of this horrible revelation. I looked up and down the deck, but the old man was nowhere to be seen.

"That's the worst of it," said Raffles. "I saw him go into the captain's cabin twenty minutes ago."

"But what can have brought him?" I cried miserably. "Can it be a coincidence—is it somebody else he's after?"

Raffles shook his head.

"Hardly this time."

"Then you think he's after you?"

"I've been afraid of it for some weeks."

"Yet there you stand!"

"What am I to do? I don't want to swim for it before I must. I begin to wish I'd taken your advice, Bunny, and left the ship at Genoa. But I've not the smallest doubt that Mac was watching both ship and station till the last moment. That's why he ran it so fine."

He took a cigarette and handed me the case, but I shook my head impatiently.

"I still don't understand," said I. "Why should he be after you? He couldn't come all this way about a jewel which was perfectly safe for all he knew. What's your own theory?"

"Simply that he's been on my track for some time—probably ever since friend Crawshaw slipped clean through his fingers last November. There have been other indications. I am really not unprepared for this. But it can only be pure suspicion. I'll defy him to bring anything home, and I'll defy him to find the pearl! Theory, my dear Bunny? I know how he's got here as

well as though I'd been inside that Scotchman's skin, and I know what he'll do next. He found out I'd gone abroad, and looked for a motive; he found out about Von Heumann and his mission, and there was his motive cut and dried. Great chance—to nab me on a new job altogether. But he won't do it, Bunny. Mark my words, he'll search the ship and search us all, when the loss is known; but he'll search in vain. And there's the skipper beckoning the whippersnapper to his cabin. The fat will be in the fire in five minutes!"

Yet there was no conflagration, no fuss, no searching of the passengers, no whisper of what had happened in the air; instead of a stir there was portentous peace; and it was clear to me that Raffles was not a little disturbed at the falsification of all his predictions. There was something sinister in silence under such a loss, and the silence was sustained for hours during which Mackenzie never reappeared. But he was abroad during the luncheon hour—he was in our cabin! I had left my book in Raffles' berth, and in taking it after lunch I touched the quilt. It was warm from the recent pressure of flesh and blood, and on an instinct I sprang to the ventilator; as I opened it the ventilator opposite was closed with a snap.

I waylaid Raffles.

"All right! Let him find the pearl."

"Have you dumped it overboard?"

"That's a question I shan't condescend to answer."

He turned on his heel, and at subsequent intervals I saw him making the most of his last afternoon with the inevitable Miss Werner. I remember that she looked both cool and smart in quite a simple affair of brown Holland, which toned well with her complexion, and was cleverly relieved with touches of scarlet. I quite admired her that afternoon, for her eyes were really very good, and so were her teeth, yet I had never admired her more directly in my

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own despite. For I passed them again and again in order to get a word with Raffles, to tell him I knew there was danger in the wind; but he would not so much as catch my eye. So at last I gave it up. And I saw him next in the captain's cabin.

They had summoned him first; he had gone in smiling; and smiling I found him when they summoned me. The stateroom was spacious, as befitted that of a commander. Mackenzie sat on the settee, his beard in front of him on the polished table; but a revolver lay in front of the captain; and, when I had entered, the chief officer, who had summoned me, shut the door and put his back to it. Von Heumann completed the party, his fingers busy with his mustache.

Raffles greeted me.

"This is a great joke!" he cried. "You remember the pearl you were so keen about, Bunny, the emperor's pearl, the pearl money wouldn't buy? It seems it was intrusted to our little friend here, to take out to Canoodle Dum, and the poor little chap's gone and lost it; *ergo*, as we're Britishers, they think we've got it!"

"But I know ye have," put in Mackenzie nodding to his beard.

"You will recognize that loyal and patriotic voice," said Raffles. "Mon, 'tis our auld acquaintance Mackenzie, o' Scoteland Yarrd an' Scoteland itsel'!"

"Dat is enough," cried the captain. "Have you submid to be searge, or do I vorce you?"

"What you will," said Raffles, "but it will do you no harm to give us fair play first. You accuse us of breaking into Captain von Heumann's stateroom during the small hours of this morning, and abstracting from it this confounded pearl. Well, I can prove that I was in my own room all night long, and I have no doubt my friend can prove the same."

"Most certainly I can," said I indig-

nantly. "The ship's boys can bear witness to that."

Mackenzie laughed, and shook his head at his reflection in the polished mahogany.

"That was ver clever," said he, "and like enough it would ha' served ye had I not stepped aboard. But I've just had a look at the ventilators, and I think I know how ye worrked it. Anyway, captain, it makes no matter. I'll just be clappin' the darbies on these young sparks, an' then——"

"By what right?" roared Raffles, in a ringing voice, and I never saw his face in such a blaze. "Search us if you like; search every scrap and stitch we possess; but you dare to lay a finger on us without a warrant!"

"I wouldna' dare," said Mackenzie gravely, as he fumbled in his breast pocket, and Raffles dived his hand into his own. "Haud his wrist!" shouted the Scotchman; and the huge Colt that had been with us many a night, but had never been fired in my hearing, clattered on the table and was raked in by the captain.

"All right," said Raffles savagely to the mate. "You can let go now. I won't try it again. Now, Mackenzie, let's see your warrant!"

"Ye'll not mishandle it?"

"What good would that do me? Let me see it," said Raffles peremptorily, and the detective obeyed. Raffles raised his eyebrows as he perused the document; his mouth hardened, but suddenly relaxed; and it was with a smile and a shrug that he returned the paper.

"Wull that do for ye?" inquired Mackenzie.

"It may. I congratulate you, Mackenzie; it's a strong hand, at any rate. Two burglaries and the Melrose necklace, Bunny!" And he turned to me with a rueful smile.

"An' all easy to prove," said the Scotchman, pocketing the warrant. "I've one o' these for you," he added,

nodding to me, "only not such a long one."

"To think," said the captain reproachfully, "that my shib should be made a den of thieves! It shall be a very disagreeable madder; I have been obliged to put you both in irons until we get to Nables."

"Surely not!" exclaimed Raffles. "Mackenzie, intercede with him; don't give your countrymen away before all hands! Captain, we can't escape; surely you could hush it up for the night? Look here, here's everything I have in my pockets; you empty yours, too, Bunny, and they shall strip us stark if they suspect we've weapons up our sleeves. All I ask is that we are allowed to get out of this without gyves upon our wrists!"

"Webbons you may not have," said the captain; "but wad about der bearl dat you were sdealing?"

"You shall have it!" cried Raffles. "You shall have it this minute if you guarantee no public indignity on board!"

"That I'll see to," said Mackenzie, "as long as you behave yourself. There now, where is't?"

"On the table under your nose."

My eyes fell with the rest, but no pearl was there; only the contents of our pockets—our watches, pocketbooks, pencils, penknives, cigarette cases—lay on the shiny table along with the revolvers already mentioned.

"Ye're humbuggin' us," said Mackenzie. "What's the use?"

"I'm doing nothing of the sort," laughed Raffles. "I'm testing you. Where's the harm?"

"It's here, joke apart?"

"On that table, by all my gods."

Mackenzie opened the cigarette cases and shook each particular cigarette. Thereupon Raffles prayed to be allowed to smoke one, and, when his prayer was heard, observed that the pearl had been on the table much longer than the ciga-

rette. Mackenzie promptly caught up the Colt and opened the chamber in the butt.

"Not there, not there," said Raffles; "but you're getting hot. Try the cartridges."

Mackenzie emptied them into his palm, and shook each one at his ear without result.

"Oh, give them to me!"

And, in an instant, Raffles had found the right one, had bitten out the bullet, and placed the emperor's pearl with a flourish in the center of the table.

"After that you will perhaps show me such little consideration as is in your power. Captain, I have been a bit of a villain, as you see, and as such I am ready and willing to lie in irons all night if you deem it requisite for the safety of the ship. All I ask is that you do me one favor first."

"That shall debend on wad der vavor has been."

"Captain, I've done a worse thing aboard your ship than any of you know. I have become engaged to be married, and I want to say good-by!"

I suppose we were all equally amazed; but the only one to express his amazement was Von Heumann, whose deep-chested German oath was almost his first contribution to the proceedings. He was not slow to follow it, however, with a vigorous protest against the proposed farewell; but he was overruled, and the masterful prisoner had his way. He was to have five minutes with the girl, while the captain and Mackenzie stood within range—but not earshot—with their revolvers behind their backs. As we were moving from the cabin, in a body, he stopped and gripped my hand.

"So I've let you in at last, Bunny—at last and after all! If you knew how sorry I am! But you won't get much—I don't see why you should get anything at all. Can you forgive me? This may be for years, and it may be for-

ever, you know! You were a good pal always when it came to the scratch; some day or other you mayn't be so sorry to remember you were a good pal at the last!"

There was a meaning in his eye that I understood; and my teeth were set, and my nerves strung ready, as I wrung that strong and cunning hand for the last time in my life.

How that last scene stays with me, and will stay to my death! How I see every detail, every shadow on the sunlit deck! We were among the islands that dot the course from Genoa to Naples; that was Elba falling back on our starboard quarter—that purple patch with the hot sun setting over it. The captain's cabin opened to starboard, and the starboard promenade deck, sheeted with sunshine and scored with shadow, was deserted but for the group of which I was one, and for the pale, slim, brown figure further aft with Raffles. Engaged? I could not believe it—cannot to this day. Yet there they stood together, and we did not hear a word; there they stood out against the sunset, and the long, dazzling highway of sunlit sea that sparkled from Elba to the *Uhlans*' plates; and their shadows reached almost to our feet.

Suddenly—an instant—and the thing was done—a thing I have never known whether to admire or to detest. He caught her—he kissed her before us all—then flung her from him so that she almost fell. It was that action which foretold the next. The mate sprang after him, and I sprang after the mate.

Raffles was on the rail, but only just, "Hold him, Bunny!" he cried. "Hold him tight!"

And, as I obeyed that last behest with all my might, without a thought of what I was doing, save that he bade me do it, I saw his hand shoot up and his head bob down, and his lithe, spare body

cut the sunset as cleanly and precisely as though he had plunged at his leisure from a diver's board!

Of what followed on deck I can tell you nothing, for I was not there. Nor can my final punishment, my long imprisonment, my everlasting disgrace, concern or profit you, beyond the interest and advantage to be gleaned from the knowledge that I at least had my desert. But one thing I must set down, believe it who will—one more thing only and I am done.

It was into a second-class cabin, on the starboard side, that I was promptly thrust in irons, and the door locked upon me as though I were another Raffles. Meanwhile a boat was lowered, and the sea scoured to no purpose, as is doubtless on record elsewhere. But either the setting sun, flashing over the waves, must have blinded all eyes, or else mine were victims of a strange illusion.

For the boat was back, the screw throbbing, and the prisoner peering through his porthole across the sunlit waters that he believed had closed forever over his comrade's head. Suddenly the sun sank behind the Island of Elba, the lane of dancing sunlight was instantaneously quenched and swallowed in the trackless waste, and in the middle distance, already miles astern, either my sight deceived me or a black speck bobbed amid the gray. The bugle had blown for dinner; it may well be that all save myself had ceased to strain an eye. And now I lost what I had found, now it rose, now sank, and now I gave it up utterly. Yet anon it would rise again, a mere mote dancing in the dim, gray distance, drifting toward a purple island, beneath a fading, western sky, streaked with dead gold and cerise. And night fell before I knew whether it was a human head or not.

Veni, Vidi, Vici

A Lexicon for First-sight Lovers

On Meeting Juliet for the First Time

- Romeo:* If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this;
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
- Juliet:* Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.
- Romeo:* Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?
- Juliet:* Aye, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.
- Romeo:* Oh! Then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.
- Juliet:* Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.
- Romeo:* Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.
Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged.

Kissing her.

- Juliet:* Then have my lips the sin that they have took.
- Romeo:* Sin from my lips? Oh, trespass sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again!
- Juliet:* You kiss by the book!—*William Shakespeare.*

GENTLE in manner, strong in performance.—*Motto of Lord Newborough.*

How It Is Done in Fairyland

- I MET a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a fairy's child.
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.
- I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone.
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.
- I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she bend, and sing
A fairy's song.—*John Keats.*

At the Ball

A VERY fashionable, gay-looking man, who seemed about thirty years of age, addressed himself to me, and begged to have the honor of dancing with me. Now Mrs. Mirvan had told us that it was highly improper for young women to dance with strangers at any public assembly. And so—yet I blush to write it to you!—I told him that I was *already engaged*. I suppose my consciousness betrayed my artifice, for he looked at me as if incredulous. And at last he said:

"Is it really possible that a man whom you have honored with your acceptance can fail to be on hand to profit from your goodness? What an insensible! For my part, though I am not the offended person, my indignation is so great that I long to kick this fellow round the room—unless, indeed, it is a partner of your own creating? But, no! It cannot be that you are so cruel! Softness itself is painted in your eyes. You could not, surely, have the barbarity so wantonly to trifle with my misery. Oh, madame, forgive my vehemence; but I am distracted to think there should exist a wretch who can slight a blessing for which I would forfeit my life. I see you are moved, madame. Generous creature, don't be alarmed. I entreat you, loveliest of mortals, I entreat you to be easy."

—Fanny Burney.



FAINT heart never won fair lady.—Old Proverb.



The Approach Courteous

"WHERE are you going to, my pretty maid?"

With a way—ay—run the rag down.

"I'm going a-milking, sir," she said.

Give us some time to run the rag down.

"May I go with you, my pretty maid?"

With a way—ay—run the rag down.

"I thank you kindly, sir," she said.

Give us some time to run the rag down.—Old Song.



HE who hath love in his heart hath spurs in his sides.—Old Proverb.



How It Is Done In India

As Trejago was driving to office, an old woman threw a packet into his dog-cart. In the packet was the half of a broken glass bangle, one flower of the blood-red dhak, a pinch of bhusa or cattle food, and eleven cardamons. That packet was a letter—not a clumsy, compromising letter, but an innocent, unintelligible lover's epistle.

A broken glass bangle stands for a Hindu widow all India over because, when her husband dies, a woman's bracelets are broken on her wrists. Trejago saw the meaning of the little bit of glass. The flower of the dhak means diversely "desire," "come," "write," or "danger," according to the other things with it. One cardamon means "jealousy," but when any article is duplicated in an object letter, it loses its symbolic meaning and stands merely for one of a number

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indicating time, or, if incense, curds, or saffron be sent also, place. The message ran, then: "A widow—dhak flower and bhusa—at eleven o'clock." The pinch of bhusa enlightened Trejago. He saw—this kind of letter leaves much to instinctive knowledge—that the bhusa referred to the big heap of cattle food over which he had fallen in Amir Nath's gully, and that the message must come from the person behind the grating; she being a widow. So the message ran then: "A widow, in the gully in which is a heap of bhusa, desires you to come at eleven o'clock."

Trejago threw all the rubbish into the fireplace and laughed. He knew that men in the East do not make love under windows at eleven in the forenoon, nor do women fix appointments a week in advance. So he went that very night at eleven.—*Rudyard Kipling.*

A GOOD occasion for courtship is when the widow returns from the funeral.—*Old Proverb.*

MAIDENS, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where seraphs might despair.—*Lord Byron.*

The Surprise Attack

SOME women alighted from the diligence, and immediately retired into the inn. One remained behind; she was very young, and stood by herself in the court. She struck me as being so extremely beautiful that I, who had never before thought of the difference between the sexes, felt myself deprived of my reason and self-control. I advanced without the slightest reserve toward her, who had become in a moment the mistress of my heart.

Although younger than myself, she received my civilities without embarrassment. I asked the cause of her journey to Amiens, and whether she had any acquaintances in the town. She ingenuously told me that she had been sent there by her parents to commence her novitiate for taking the veil. Love so quickened my perception, even in the short moment it had been enthroned, that I saw in this announcement a death blow to my hopes. I spoke to her in a way that made her at once understand what was passing in my mind, for she had more experience than myself. It was against her consent that she was consigned to a convent. I combated the cruel intention of her parents with all the arguments that my new-born passion and schoolboy eloquence could suggest. I assured her that, if she would place reliance on my honor, and on the tender interest with which she had already inspired me, I would sacrifice my life to deliver her from the tyranny of her parents and to render her happy.—*L'Abbé Prévost.*

WIN her with gifts, if she respect not words,
Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,
More quick than words do move a woman's mind.—*William Shakespeare.*

POLITENESS costs nothing and gains everything.—*Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.*

In thy discourse, if thou desire to please,
 All such is courteous, useful, new, or witty:
 Usefulness comes by labor, wit by ease:
 Courtesy grows in court; news in the citie.—*George Herbert.*

The Lady Simpers

MISS SQUEERS made up her mind that she would take a personal observation of Nicholas the very next day. In pursuance of this design, the young lady watched the opportunity of her mother being engaged, and her father absent, and went accidentally into the schoolroom to get a pen mended.

"I beg your pardon," faltered Miss Squeers; "I thought my father was—or might be— Dear me, how very awkward!"

"Mr. Squeers is out," said Nicholas, by no means overcome by the apparition.

"If I hadn't thought my father was here, I wouldn't on any account have— It is very provoking—must look so very strange," murmured Miss Squeers, blushing, and glancing from the pen in her hand to Nicholas at his desk, and back again.

"If that is all you want," said Nicholas, pointing to the pen, "perhaps I can supply his place. Shall it be a hard or soft nib?" he inquired, smiling to prevent himself from laughing outright.

"He *has* a beautiful smile," thought Miss Squeers.

"Which did you say?" asked Nicholas.

"Dear me! Oh, as soft as possible, if you please." With which words Miss Squeers sighed. It might be to give Nicholas to understand that her heart was soft, and that the pen was wanted to match.

In fact Miss Squeers was in love with Nicholas Nickleby!—*Charles Dickens.*

Good manners and soft words have brought many a difficult thing to pass.—*Vanbrugh.*

NONE but the brave deserve the fair.—*Old Proverb.*

The Dangers of Boldness

A NEAT, fair lady walking in the garden,

A well-dressed soldier came riding by;

He rode right up, so kindly spoken,

And he said, "Pretty maid, could you fancy I?"

"Go 'way, go 'way, you bravéd soldier!

You're not the man I've taken you to be.

You're not a man of any honor,

Or you never would have forced yourself on me."

—*Kentucky Mountaineer's Song.*

HE that never rode, never fell.—*Old Proverb.*



A MAID that laughs is half taken.—*Old Proverb.*



Who Began It?

As I was going up Primrose Hill
Primrose Hill was dirty,
And there I met a pretty maid,
And she dropped me a curtsy.

"Little maid, pretty maid,
Blessings light upon you.
Had I but a crown a day,
I'd spend it all upon you."—*Old Song.*



WOMEN commend a modest man, but do not like him.—*Old Proverb.*



How to Approach a Strange Young Lady

"I've seen you several times out here since I arrived, Miss Warden," said Mr. Vince. "Four in all," he added precisely.

"Really?" said Ruth coldly.

"Do you believe in affinities?" he said. "Affinities are the—the—— Wait a minute! I've got it! I knew I should, but these good things take time. Affinities are the zero on the roulette board of life. Just as we select a number on which to stake our money, so do we select a type of girl whom we think we should like to marry. And just as zero pops up instead of the number, so does our affinity come along and upset all our preconceived notions on the type of girl we should like to marry."

"I——" began Ruth again.

"The analogy is in the rough at present, but you see the idea. Take my case for instance. When I saw you a couple of days ago, I knew in an instant that you were my affinity. But for years I had been looking for a woman almost your exact opposite. You are dark. Three days ago I couldn't have imagined myself marrying any one who was not fair. Your eyes are gray. Three days ago my preference for blue eyes was almost a byword. You have a shocking temper——"

"Mr. Vince!"

"There!" said that philosopher complacently. "You stamped. The gentle, blue-eyed blonde whom I was looking for would have drooped timidly. Three days ago my passion for timid droopers amounted to an obsession. Miss Warden, will you marry me?"—*P. G. Wodehouse.*

CONFIDENCE brings more to conversation than does wit.—*French Proverb.*

EVERYTHING is pardoned, save want of tact.—*French Proverb.*

I HAVE ever been a poor hand at talking to barmaids. It is, I am convinced, an art apart, an art like any other—needing first the natural gift, then the long, patient training, and finally the courageous practice. Alas for me! I possessed neither gift, training, nor courage. Courage I lacked most of all. It was in vain that I said to myself that it was like swimming—all that was needed was "confidence." That was the very thing I couldn't muster. No doubt I am handicapped by a certain respectful homage which I always feel involuntarily to any one in the shape of woman, for anything savoring of respect is the last thing to win the barmaid heart divine. The man to win her is he who calls loudly for his drink, without a "Please," or a "Thank you," throws his hat at the back of his head, gulps down half his glass, and, while drawing breath for the other half, takes a hard, indifferent look at her, and in an offhand voice throws her some fatuous, mirthless jest.

Now I've never been able to do this in the convincing grand manner of the British male; and whatever I've said, the effect has been the same. I've talked about theaters and music halls, of events of the day; I've even, Heaven help me, talked of racing and football, but I might as well have talked of Herbert Spencer. I suppose I didn't talk about them in the right way. I'm sure it must be my fault somewhere, for certainly they seem easy enough to please, poor things! However, my failure remains, and sometimes, even, I find it extremely hard to attract their attention in the ordinary way of business. I don't mind my neighbor being preferred before me, but I do object to his being served before me!—*Richard Le Gallienne.*

A WOMAN that paints puts up a bill: "To Let."—*Old Proverb.*



by Frank Norris

Author of



"The Pit"
and
"The Octopus"

TWO HEARTS THAT BEAT AS ONE

I GUESS," began Hardenberg, "that you never yet heard about that time when Strokher—the Englisher—and Bunt McBride had a friendly go with bare knuckles—ten rounds it was, all because of a young woman.

It is a small earth, and I had just found out that my friend Bunt McBride—horse-wrangler, miner, faro-dealer and bone-gatherer—whose world was the plains and ranges of the great Southwest, was known of the Three Black Crows, Hardenberg, Ally Bazan and Strokher—the Englisher—and had even foregathered with them on more than one of their ventures for Cyrus Ryder's Exploitation Agency—ventures that had nothing of the desert in them, but that involved the sea, and the schooner, and the taste of the great-lunged canorous trades.

"Never heard of that, hey?" repeated Hardenberg.

I professed ignorance.

We were sitting on the stringpiece of a wharf, over in the Oakland Creek

—which is not a creek, but an arm of San Francisco Bay—where some fool had told us we could catch striped bass. It was now eleven o'clock, and we had been there since early morning without even the mild diversion of rebaiting the hooks.

Hardenberg reeled up, examined the bait and cast out far into the creek. Then he set the click and laid the rod down beside him.

"Now," he said, doggedly, "bite or bunk—it's all one to me. But I don't propose to dawdle this here buggy whip no longer"—it was my pet eight-ounce split bamboo—"but about Bunt and Strokher, now."

"They fought?"

Hardenberg grunted.

"They sure did," he said, grimly. "Friendly like and all, but keen, keen as pirates."

He took a pinch of tobacco from his pouch and rolled a cigarette in the twinkling of an eye, using only one hand, in true Mexican fashion.

"Now," said he, "I am going to tell you all about that same affair just so as you can get a line on the consuming and devouring dam-foolishness of male humans when there is a woman in the case. Woman," said Hardenberg, wagging his head philosophically, "woman is a weather-breeder. Mister Dixon, there are three things I'm afraid of. I don't just rightly call to mind at this moment what the last two are, but the first is Woman. When I sight Woman bearing down on my course, I put my ship about, Mr. Dixon, without loss of time. And Strokher," he added, irrelevantly, "would have married this woman. Yes, and Bunt would have married her, too, for the matter of that."

"Was there another man?" I asked.

"No," said Hardenberg. Then he began to chuckle behind his mustache. "Yes, they was," he smote a knee. "They sure was another man. You may well say that. Well, now, Mister Dixon, lemme take and tell you the whole 'how.'"

And here follows the "how" of the battle of Strokher and Bunt McBride, as Hardenberg told it to me:

"It began," said Hardenberg, "when I joined in with a scheme that Cy Ryder had gotten up for the Three Crows. There was a row down in Guatemala. Some gazabo named Palachi—Barreto. Palachi—finding times dull and the boys off their feed, ups and says, 'Exercise is what I need. I will now take and overthrow the blame government.' So this same Palachi rounds up a band of *insurrectos* and begins pestering and hectoring the government, and roaring and bellowing, and making a procession of himself, till he regularly pervades the landscape, and before you know what, here's a real live Revolution-thing spoiling the scenery, and the government is plum bothered.

"They rounded up the gazabo at last, at a place on the coast, but he escapes as

easy as how-do-you-do. But he can't get back to his *insurrectos*, the blame government holding possession of all the passes into the hinterland. 'So,' says Palachi, 'what is the matter with me going up to 'Frisco and getting in touch with my financial backers, and conspirating to smuggle down a load of arms?' And this same thing he does. There's where we Three Black Crows come in.

"Cy Ryder gives us the job of taking the schooner down to a certain point on the Guatemala coast and there delivering to the agents of Palachi three thousand stand of .48 Winchesters.

"But when we began to talk details Ryder says, 'Boys, here's where I cashes right in. You set right to me for the schooner and the cargo; but you go to Palachi's agent over here in Berkeley, across the bay, for instructions and directions.'

"'But,' says Strokher, the Englisher, 'this blind betting don't suit our hand. Why not make right up to Mister Palachi himself?'

"'No,' Ryder said; 'no, boys, you can't do that. The signor is laying as low as a toad in a wheel-track these days, because of the local police. You must have your palaver with the agent, which,' he says, 'is a woman.' And at that I groaned low and despairing.

"So soon as Ryder says 'Woman' I knew there was trouble in the wind. And right there is where I lost my presence of mind. What I should have said was, 'Mister Ryder, Ally Bazan, Bunt McBride, and gentlemen all: You are good boys, and you deal and drink fair, and I love you all with a love that cannot be uttered; but I am not keeping case on this game any longer. Woman and me is like mules and music. We weren't ever made to ride in the same go-cart. Good-by.' That's what I should have said. But I didn't. I walked right into the mess like a mud-head that I was, and got mired, just as I might have known I would.

"Ryder here female we four hi- rain as eve- place after all lorn and in the mid- sion, like a and rang that came Esperanza Ryder had- ers that o- note. Th- was a gre- clapped ey- and to wa-

"Well, mucho, a sofa in th- on our ki- rail. An- talking, g- because h- his feet- jiggering- my knee- and then- sat all in- gered. t- to the st- were.

"Then a rustle- grabbed- scared- then—th- into tha- liest-look- wore ha-

"She son; sh- was tal- eye— she gav- same e- lie righ- esteem- wipe y- so as y-

"Ryder gave us the address of this here female agent over in Berkeley, and we four hiked over there in as cruel a rain as ever killed corn. We found the place after a while—a lodging-house, all lorn and loony, set down all by itself in the middle of some real estate extension, like an L. S. station on a sand spit, and rang the bell and asked the party that came to the door if the Signorita Esperanza Ulivarri—that was the name Ryder had given us—was receiving callers that day—and we showed Ryder's note. The party that opened the door was a greaser, the worst-looking I ever clapped eyes on, but he said to come in and to wait '*poco tiempo*.'

"Well, we waited *mucho tiempo*—*muy mucho*, all sitting on the edge of the sofa in the front parlor, with our hats on our knees, like philly-loo birds on a rail. And Strokher, who was to do the talking, got the fidgets by and by; and because he was only resting the toes of his feet on the floor his knees began jiggering; and along of watching him, my knees began to go, and then Butt's, and then Ally Bazan's. And there we sat all in a row and jiggered and jiggered. Great snakes! it makes me sick to the stomach to think what idiots we were.

"Then, after a long time, we heard a rustle of silk petticoats, and we all grabbed hold of one another and looked scared from under our eyebrows, and then—then, Mister Dixon, there walks into that bunk-house parlor the loveliest-looking female woman that ever wore hair.

"She was lovelier than Mary Anderson; she was lovelier than Lotta. She was tall and black-haired, and had an eye— Well, I don't know—but when she gave you one little flicker of that same eye, you felt it was about time to lie right down and say, 'Ma'am, I would esteem it a favor if you were to take and wipe your boots on my waistcoat, just so as you could hear my heart beating.'

That's the kind of female woman *she* was.

"Well, when Strokher had caught his second wind, we began to talk business.

"'And you are to take a passenger back with you,' says Esperanza, after a while.

"'What kind might he be?' asks Strokher.

She fisted out her calling card at that and tore it in two and gave Strokher one half.

"'It's the party,' she says, 'who'll come aboard off San Diego, on your way down, and who will give you the other half of this card—the half I have here—which I am going to mail to him. And you be sure the halves match before you let him come aboard. And when that party *does* come aboard,' she says, 'he is to take charge.'

"'Very good,' says Strokher, mincing and silly, like a chessy-cat lapping cream. 'Very good, ma'm; your orders shall be obeyed.' He sure said it just like that, as if he spoke out of a story-book. And I kicked him under the table for the foolishness of it.

"Then he palavered a whole lot more, and settled a good many preliminaries, and when we'd got as far as we could that day, the signorita up and said:

"'Now, me good fellows'—she spoke in Spanish—'now, me good fellows, you must drink a drink with me.' She herded us out into the dining room, and brought out—*not* whisky, but a fat green-and-gold bottle of champagne, and when Ally Bazan had fired it off she filled our glasses—dinky little glasses they were, like flower vases. Then she stood up there before us, fine and tall, and all in black silk, and put her glass up high and sung out:

"'To the Revolution!'

"And we, all solemn-like, said 'To the Revolution,' and crooked our elbows.

"When we came to, about half an hour later, we were in the street outside,

having just said good-by to the signorita. We were quiet enough the first block or so, and then Bunt McBride says—stopping dead in his tracks: 'I pause to remark that when a young female party having black hair and a killing eye gets good and ready to travel up the center aisle of a church, I know the gent to show her the way, which he is six foot one in his stocking feet, some freckled across the nose, and shoots with both hands.'

"Which observations," answered Strokher, twirling his lady-killers, 'have my hearty indorsement and coöperation, saving in the particular of the description of the gent. The gent to show the way is five feet eleven high, three feet thick, is the only son of my mother, and has a yellow mustache and a buck tooth.'

"He don't qualify," put in Bunt; first, because he's a Englisher, and, second, because he's up against a American—and, besides, he has a tooth that is bucked.'

"Buck or no buck," flared out Strokher, 'what might be the meaning of that remark concerning being an Englisher?'

"The fact of this being Englisher," answered Bunt, 'is only half the hoe-handle; t'other half being the fact that the first-named gent is all American. No Yank ain't never took no dust from off a Englisher, whether in walking-matches, women or war.'

"But there's an Englisher," sung out Strokher, 'not forty mile from here as can nick the nose of a freckled Yank, if so be occasion require.'

"Now, wasn't that foolish-like, of those two gazabos flying up into the air like two he-hens on a hot plate, for nothing in the world except that a neat-looking female woman had flickered a eye at them?'

"Well, we others, Ally Bazan and me, gave them some pretty straight talk about being more kinds of a blame fool

than a pup with a bug. They simmered down some, but all the way home I could see them glaring at each other, and drawing themselves up, proud-like and presumptuous, and I groaned again, not loud, but deep, as the good book says.

"We had two or three more palavers with the Signorita Esperanza, and slacked the deck to beat down the harbor police, and to nip down the coast with our contraband. And each time we talked with the signorita there were those two locoes stepping and sidling and squeezing her hand under the table, and acting that silly that Ally Bazan and I took and beat our heads against the wall as soon as we were alone, just for pure out-and-out mortification.

"Finally came the last talky-talk, and we were to sail next day, and maybe snatch the little joker through or be took and hung by the *costa guardas*. And 'Good-by' says Strokher to Esperanza, in a fainting, die-away voice, like a kitten with a cold: 'And ain't we ever going to meet no more?'

"I sure hopes as much," put in Bunt McBride, smirking so you would have thought he was a he-milliner selling a bonnet. 'I hope,' says he, 'that our delightful acquaintanceship ain't going to end this way.'

"Oh, you nice big mister men," pipes up the signora, in English, 'we will meet down there in Guatemala soon again—yes. Because I go down by the vapor carriages to-morrow.'

"Unprotected, too," says Strokher, wagging his fool head. 'Unprotected, and so young.'

"Holy Geronimo! I don't know what more fool driveli they had. But they each kissed Esperanza good-by, and finally we all got away. Ally Bazan and me rounded them up, and took them to the boat, and put them to bed as though they were so many kids.

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"The next day, about one o'clock in the morning, we let the schooner slip, quiet as may be, and caught the out-tide through the gate of the bay. Lord! we were keyed up, I can tell you, and Ally Bazan and Bunt were in the bows with drawn and cocked revolvers in case the police boat should come along and ask questions.

"Well, what with this and that, we nipped out with the little jokers—they were down in the manifest as mining pumps—and began to cross the bar.

"Poor Bunt had some trouble just then. You see, this was the first time he had ever gone galleying about on blue water, and when that schooner hit the bar he began to remember his inside arrangements weren't made of chilled steel and rawhide. First, he got regularly sad and shivery, and then he said he felt as poor and mean as a prairie dog that has eaten a horned toad by mistake. He went to Ally Bazan and gave it out that he was going to die, and that he was sure sad and depressed, and hadn't much use for life, anyhow. He said he'd ridden some pretty lively sunfishes in his time, but that for bucking, rearing and general high and lofty tumbling that there boat beat anything in his experience.

"But we sent him below, and had him lay up quiet, and after a while he felt better. By next day he could sit up and take solid food, and straightaway began his everlasting dam-foolishness with Strokher again.

"You would have thought that each of those two mush-heads was trying to act the part of a cow which has lost her calf. They went mooing and mooning about that schooner that mournful it would have made you yell just out of sheer nervousness. First one would up and hold his head in his hand and lean on the rail and sigh till he'd raise his pants clean out the top of his boots. And then the other would go off in another part of the boat, and he'd sigh

and moon, and take on fit to sicken a seagull.

"When we'd sit down to feed, Strokher would say to Bunt:

"'Bunt, d'you thinks the signorita will take harm along o' those *Rurales* and government spies?'

"And Bunt would say back:

"'Stroke, I don't just rightly know, but I'm doubtful as to how she should 'a' been let go alone. Such a young and byoutifile female girl among them roving bands o' lawless soldiery!'

"But, by and by, when we were maybe six days to the good of 'Frisco, the two gets kind of sassy with each other, and, at last, they has a heart-to-heart talk, and decides that either one of them would stand a chance to win so only the other was out of the game.

"'It's double or nothing,' said Bunt, who was something of a card-sharp, 'for either you or me, Stroke; and if you are agreeable, I'll play you a round of jacks for the chance at the signorita—the loser to pull out of the running for good and all.

"'No, Strokher wouldn't come in on any such game, he said. He'd win her, he said, as a man, and not as a poker player. No, nor he won't throw dice for the chance of winning Esperanza, nor he won't flip a coin, nor yet wrestle.

"'But,' said he, all of a sudden, 'I'll tell you what I will do. You are a big, thick, strapping hulk of a two-fisted drayhorse, Brunt, and I ain't an *effete* degenerate myself. Here's what I propose—that we lay out a sixteen-foot ring on the quarter-deck of this here boat, and you and me strips to the buff and settles the whole business by Queensbury rules—and may the best man win.'

"Bunt looks him over.

"'And,' says he, 'what might be your weight, Stroke. I don't figure on hurting you if so be you are below my class.'

"I fight at a hundred and seventy," says Strokher.

"And me," answers Bunt, "at a hundred and seventy-five. We're matched."

"Is it a go?" asks Strokher.

"You bet your great grandmammy's tortis-shell chessy cat it's a go," says Bunt, quick as a wink.

"We didn't lose any time trying to reason with them, for they were sure set on having the go, and getting the question settled. But Ally Bazan says to me:

"This here ain't going to be no bare-knuckle bout, let me tell you, Hardie, for the reason that them two boys ain't fit to die yet; and if they turn themselves loose on one another with bare knuckles there's going to be a double case of manslaughter on our hands. Did you bring your gauntlets along?"

"It just happened that I did have them in my chest, and Bunt he had a pair, too. We got them all out, and Ally Bazan sews a big wad of raveled rope onto each one and covers the same with oilcloth off the kitchen table. Then we laid out a ring on the quarter-deck and ran the schooner in under the lee of the land and lay her to.

"Then, along about four o'clock on a fine, still day, we resined the ring and says, 'All is ready.'

"Ally Bazan, he's referee and I'm timekeeper, and have to ring the ship's bell every three minutes to let them know to quit and that the round's over.

"We gets them into the ring, each in his own corner, sitting on a bucket, the timekeeper being second to Bunt and the referee second to Strokher. And then, after they've shook hands I climbs up on the chicken coop and rings the bell, and they begins.

"Mister Dixon, I've seen Tim Heenan at his best, and Sayers when he was a slasher, and also several other pugs and boxers; and I've seen two short-horned bulls arguing about a question of leadership. But, so help me *Bob!* the fight I

saw that day made the others look like a young ladies' quadrille. Oh, I ain't going to tell you of that mill in detail, nor yet by rounds. Rounds! There wa'n't any rounds after the first five minutes. I rung the blame bell till I'd rung her loose, and Ally Bazan yelled, 'Break away,' and, 'Time's up,' till he was hoarse, but you could no more separate them two than you could have put the brakes on an earthquake. They made their own rounds. Every now and then they'd pull apart and Bunt maybe would say, all blowing and panting:

"You're such a good man, Stroke."

"And Strokher would wipe the hair out of his eyes with the back of his glove and say back, between breaths:

"You're some willing yourself, Bunt."

"And then they'd go back at it again till the whole ship trembled.

"At about supptime we pulled them apart—we could do it by then, they were both so tired, and jammed each one of them down in his corner. I rang the bell good and hard, and Ally Bazan stood up on a bucket in the middle of the ring and said:

"I declare this here glove contest a draw."

"And draw it surely was. They'd fought for two hours steady, and never a one got the better of the other. They'd given each other lick for lick as fast and as steady as they could stand to it, wrestling, roughing and boring in, upper-cutting and side-stepping—and both willing to the very last.

"When Ally Bazan called it a draw, they got up and wobbled toward each other and shook hands, and Bunt he said:

"Stroke, I thanks you a whole lot for as neat a go as ever I mixed into."

"And Strokher answered up:

"Bunt, I love you better than ever. You're the first man I've met that I couldn't do, too."

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them! Well, I guess their mothers might have told them apart. Nobody else could.

"You remember, now, that we were to take on a party at San Diego who was to show the other half of Esperanza's card, and, thereafter to boss the job. Well, we hiked on down to San Diego, and stood off and on till nightfall and there showed two green lights and one white every three and a half minutes for half an hour—this being the signal agreed on.

"There was a kind of moon, and we could see pretty well. After we'd signaled about an hour we got the answer—a one-minute green flare, and pretty soon made out a boat coming off. There were two people in her, the boatman and another party sitting in the stern.

"Ally Bazan and me and Strokher and Bunt were all leaning over the side watching, when all at once I up and groaned some sad; the party in the stern of the boat being female.

"Ain't we never going to get shut of them?" said I. But the words were no more than off my teeth when Strokher piped up with:

"It's *her*!" and he gasped just as though he'd been shot hard.

"What," says Bunt, "her? Oh, I'm sure a-dreaming," he says, just that silly like.

"And the mugs we've got," says Strokher, and at that they both fell to swearing to beat all I ever heard.

"I *can't* let her see me so bunged up," said Bunt; "oh, whatever-and-which is to be done?"

"And I," whimpered Strokher, "I look like a real genuine blow-in-the-glass pug. But, never mind," he said, "we'll tell her these are sure honorable scars got because we fought for her."

"Well, the boat came up and the female party jumped out and came up the ladder onto the deck. Without saying a word, she handed to Bunt the torn half

of the card, and he fished out his half and matched the two by the light of a lantern.

"By this time the rowboat had gone off a little ways. Then, at last, Bunt said:

"Welcome aboard, signorita."

"And Strokher cut in with:

"We thought it was to be a man who was to join us here to take command; but *you*," he says—and, oh! sugar wouldn't have melted in his mouth; "but *you* are always our mistress."

"Very right, *bueno*, me good fellows," said the signorita, "but don't you be afraid that there's no *man* at the head of this business."

"And with that the party chucks off bonnet and skirt, and *I'll be a Mexican if it wasn't a man, after all!*

"I'm the Signor Baretto Palachi, gentlemen," said he. "The jingo police made the disguise necessary. Gentlemen, I regret to have been obliged to deceive such gallant *compadres*; but war knows no law."

"Bunt and Strokher gave one look at the signor and another at their own spoiled faces. Then:

"Come back here with the boat, roared Strokher, and with that—upon me word, you'd have thought the two were both moved with the same spring—over the side they went, into the water, and struck out for the boat as hard as ever they could lay to it.

"The boat met them—God only knows what the boatman thought—they climbed in, and the last I saw of them they were putting for the shore—each taking an oar—and, mister man, they were making that boat *hum*.

"Well, we sailed away without them, and a year or more afterward I met them in Cy Ryder's office in 'Frisco."

"Did you ask them about it all?" said I.

"Mister man," observed Hardenberg, "I am several kinds of a dam-fool, I know it. But sometimes I am wise. I

want to live as long as I can, and die when I can't help it. I did *not*, neither then nor there-afterward, either make a joke, nor yet any allusion about or concerning the Signorita Esperanza Uli-

varri in the hearing of Strokher and Bunt McBride. I've seen—you remember—both those boys use their fists, and, likewise, Bunt, as he says, shoots with both hands."



HOW men miss-see their saviors! No one has written a real life of Charlotte Corday, and yet she was the first of the great modern women, greater, I think, even than Jeanne d'Arc, for she had no faith to sustain her, only her great heart. Don't you know what she said about her deed when the public prosecutor tried to make out that she was the assassin of a great and good man? "I have killed him," she said, "and he is dead. You cannot kill great men." And she was right; she had killed him. After his death they started Marat hats in Paris, and Marat this and Marat that, but the vile worship could not last. Within the year his body was taken from the grave and tossed in dust to the winds! Charlotte Corday had killed him; he was dead.—*Frank Harris.*



RESPECTABILITY! A suburban villa, a piano in the drawing-room, and going home to dinner. Such things are no doubt very excellent, but they do not promote intensity of feeling, fervor of mind; and as art is in itself an outcry against the animality of existence, it would be well that the life of the artist should be a practical protest against the so-called decencies of life; and he can best protest by frequenting a tavern and cutting his club.

If lovers were not necessary for the development of poet, novelist, and actress, why have they always had lovers—Sappho, George Eliot, George Sand, Rachel, Sara? To play *Rosalind* a woman must have had more than one lover, and if she has been made to wait in the rain and has been beaten, she will have done a great deal to qualify herself for the part.—*George Moore.*



LOVE cannot be strangled even as a lion is strangled, and the skill of the mightiest athlete avails nothing in such a conflict.—*Theophile Gautier.*



THE art of ignoring is one of the accomplishments of every well-bred girl, so carefully instilled that at last she can even ignore her own thoughts and her own knowledge.—*H. G. Wells.*



WOMEN by nature cannot help confusing body and soul, and what to a man is a mere fancy of the senses, to them is a spiritual tragedy.—*Richard Le Gallienne.*

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*The Primrose
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Pariah Fairy

THIS is a tale of the days when Yuan Shi Kai ruled in China, and gin cost three shillings a bottle, and a bottle did not take long to empty at the long bars of the Canton and Shanghai clubs.

Just outside Hongkong, some two miles along the road that leads eastward to the village of Pu-lok, there used to be—and may be still—an hotel and restaurant—the Boa Vista—kept by a half-caste Portuguese name Diab. It was a place of bad repute, frequented by all nationalities. On evenings when one of the big mail ships came into harbor, and Diab could obtain the services of the ship's colored band, there were great doings at the Boa Vista. On these evenings wise men drank Japanese beer and foolish persons "squirrel" whisky, and all danced the soles off their feet on the asphalt terrace facing the sea.

At one of the little tables, in front of her a glass of atrocious port, sat a girl known to all and sundry as Jasmine.

She had pleasant blue eyes and pretty lips. Her cheeks were brightly colored and her eyebrows heavily penciled. She was what was called out there a "pariah fairy."

Two tables away from her sat a Chinaman. He was plump and unprepossessing. He wore a long white coat, embroidered with fine braid. He cracked and ate peanuts and sipped squirrel whisky, raw, from a little glass. From time to time he glanced across at the girl, and his eyes twinkled. The girl took no notice of him.

A table away again, on the other side of the girl, was a young man in a drill suit, wearing the two-colored tie of a British regiment. He was sparely made, sunburned, and good looking. From time to time the girl looked at him covertly out of the corners of her eyes. He ignored her completely.

On a raised platform a colored band played tunes that mingled memories of London and Paris with the magic of the East. Overhead, tall palms nodded

their heads and tropical stars shone brightly. Across the channel the lights of old Kowloon City flickered. Now and again a red or green light showed as a vessel passed. Everywhere little golden sampan lamps bobbed and ducked and shimmered upon the water.

Diab moved in and out among his patrons taking orders. The Chinaman, failing to attract the girl's attention, beckoned to Diab and whispered in his ear. Diab looked across at her table, then crossed over to her. He leaned down and said something. Jasmine's eyes flashed, and she shook her head. Diab bent over her again, this time speaking more forcibly. The gist of what he said was this:

"The Boa Vista is a respectable establishment; you are not respectable. If you do not make yourself pleasant to my clients, I will not permit you to stay."

For a moment Jasmine's pretty eyes flashed more angrily still, and she gathered up her bag and rose from the table. The Boa Vista represented for her an oasis of light and life in an unutterable existence, but there were limits beyond which she would not go.

It was at this moment that the man in the drill suit and the regimental tie intervened. "Tubby" Carslake had been watching the situation. He crossed over to Jasmine's table, raised his hat, and asked her if she would drink with him.

The Portuguese proprietor rubbed his hands.

"Madame is going away," he said.

"No, she isn't!" said Tubby. "She is going to stop and have a drink with me—aren't you?"

He turned to Jasmine.

"Thanks!" said Jasmine. "That dirty chink wanted me to go and sit at his table, and I wouldn't, so he"—she indicated the proprietor's back—"told me to clear out."

"Dog!" said Tubby. "Well, you are

all right now, anyway. I say, this is rather a good tune. Shall we dance?"

Jasmine nodded. They rose from their table, and Tubby slipped his arm round her slim waist. The band was playing a Hawaiian Rag.

"You dance well," said Tubby, looking down at Jasmine.

Her eyes were bright, and there was a happy smile about her lips.

"I danced on the stage once," she answered.

"Did you——"

Tubby stopped. People do not ask each other questions in the outer world of the Far East.

As the Chinaman, Ah Ming, watched the girl dance, his eyes grew smaller. Like other Chinamen of wealth, Ah Ming was used to getting what he wanted. He fingered a necklace of jade that hung round his neck. The necklace was worth in London at least one hundred pounds.

When the music stopped, Tubby led Jasmine back to their table, and, saying that he wanted to go into the hotel to buy some cigarettes, promised to rejoin her in a few minutes. Diab, followed by a boy, carrying drinks, approached the table. Ah Ming beckoned to Diab, slipped the necklace in his hand, and whispered in his ear. Diab glanced at the hotel entrance to see that the English officer was not returning, and crossed over to Jasmine.

He put the necklace in her lap. Jasmine picked it up, fingered it, and saw its value.

"It is pretty; does he want to sell it?" she asked.

Diab bent forward and whispered in her ear. What he said was this:

"Ah Ming is very rich, and gives necklaces to girls who are pleasant to him."

At this moment Tubby returned. He saw Diab whispering to Jasmine. He saw Jasmine holding the necklace in her hand, and he saw Ah Ming watching

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them closely. He stepped forward, took the necklace from Jasmine, crossed over to Ah Ming's table, called him in Chinese the most forceful name he knew, insulted his ancestors, and threw the necklace into his face.

Ah Ming's hand slid up his long sleeve, and his eyes closed to two slits. Diab ran over and put himself between the pair.

"Turn that blasted chink out of here!" Tubby commanded him.

Now, the Boa Vista stood on British crown property. Diab knew it would be poor policy to quarrel on account of a Chinaman with an officer in his majesty's forces. He accordingly spoke soft words in Ah Ming's ear. Diab murmured that it would be easy to arrange for Ah Ming to see more of the white girl, but that at the moment, as the British officer was jealous, it would be best if he—Ah Ming—left the premises.

Ah Ming picked up his necklace, rose to his feet and fanning himself carefully, left the garden.

Later, Tubby drove Jasmine back to her home. She shared a house with two other girls. When they arrived, the girls and some men were dancing to a gramophone in a large room. Tubby's appearance was hailed with the cry that, as a newcomer, he should call for drinks for the party. After the custom of those parts he ordered "a bottle of wine." Some execrable champagne—for which he paid an exorbitant price—was brought, and glasses were refilled.

He danced several times with Jasmine, growing more and more conscious of the difference between her and the other girls.

Once she said to him:

"That was decent of you to drive the chink away. Some chaps would not have troubled to."

Whereat Tubby thought more than

ever. Some girls he knew would not have minded the chink.

"Been out here long?" he asked, casually, later.

"Three months. Wish to God I'd never come," Jasmine answered.

He saw something suspiciously like tears in her eyes. Again an unusual phenomenon in that world.

"Come, let's dance!" she said.

As he put his arm round her, and they glided round the floor, she seemed to throw the whole of her vitality into the music.

When the party broke up, Tubby squeezed her hand as one pal might squeeze another's. He did not bend to kiss her as the other men did the other girls.

"I shall see you again to-morrow," he said.

"Do—to-night has cheered me up!"

He felt her hand tighten on his.

So began the acquaintance between the pair. The intervening period leading up to the point where Tubby fell in love with Jasmine and she with him need not be described in detail. Suffice that when the Jasmynes of this world love they love much.

A month later Tubby's colonel sent for Tubby. He said it had been reported to him that Tubby had been seen several times in public with a girl of a certain character. Tubby did not deny this. The colonel said that he would be obliged if Tubby would remember that he was a gentleman and an officer of the —th, and behave himself accordingly. Tubby stood stiffly to attention. The colonel knew Tubby to be reliable in war, and was anxious to keep him in time of peace. He spoke kindly.

"Look here, Carslake, I want you to give me your word as a gentleman to give up seeing this girl."

"I'm afraid I cannot do that, sir."

Tubby spoke quickly between his teeth.

"You were seen shopping with her in the High Street, and—and I hear, you took her to the theater."

"I did, sir."

"I cannot possibly allow this sort of thing; it is an insult to the wives of your brother officers; you see that, don't you?"

"I understand what you mean, sir."

Tubby felt in the breast pocket of his tunic. "This is my resignation, sir. I meant to send it in at the end of the month. But perhaps it would be best if I gave it to you to-day."

"Come, come, Carslake! I really can't listen to such nonsense. A young fellow, just beginning soldiering! I think you will do very well, you know, if you—er—steady down a bit."

"I must leave, sir!" said Tubby, doggedly.

"I cannot accept your papers in this way. You just leave that document there, come back in a week's time, and we will talk the matter over again."

Tubby looked his colonel straight in the face.

"I think I ought to tell you, sir, that I have asked the lady you—er—refer to, to marry me."

"What!"

The colonel half rose from his chair. The look in Tubby's eyes stopped him from speaking. The colonel was a man of the world.

Tubby passed over the paper on which he had written out his resignation. The colonel took it, and drummed on the blotting pad with a pencil. He was thinking hard. Presently he looked up.

"Very well, Carslake! That is all."

Tubby saluted, and turned about.

That morning the colonel had a prolonged conference with his adjutant and the senior subaltern. He placed before them the matter of Tubby in detail,

and asked if they had anything to suggest.

"The Li-Chow guard is being changed to-day," said the adjutant. "Hunter is down to go, but I could put Carslake on instead. That would keep him out of the place for a month."

The Li-Chow guard, found by the —th Regiment, were stationed on detachment duty, twenty miles up the West River. The officer in charge was not allowed to be absent for more than six hours at a time—which just gave him time to go into Canton, but not so far as Hongkong.

"She would always be running up to Canton to meet him," said the senior subaltern, who had himself, when on guard at Li-Chow, been visited by a lady from Hongkong.

The adjutant had an idea.

"If we saw the chief of police, sir, I dare say that he could arrange that this girl was put on a ship. They are all under control. By the time Carslake is back she will be gone."

A stupider man than the colonel would have agreed to this solution. But the colonel knew Tubby and his type. Tubby, on finding out what had happened, might do something excessively foolish.

"No; I think we had better try and get at the lady," said the colonel. "Do either of you know her?"

The adjutant, who was a married man, appeared pained at the suggestion. Joe Smith, however, the senior subaltern, said that he knew Jasmine slightly.

"Well, look here, Smith, go up and see this girl this afternoon. Explain to her that this has got to be stopped at all costs. Put it nicely, you know. Say that if she cares to run up to Japan for the rest of the summer, money will be found for her passage. But let her understand that, if need be, other steps will be taken to put an end to this matter. I think, with tact, you would be

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able to arrange things. Good morning, Smith. Sorry to drag you into this, but I have to look after my subalterns, you know. I am their father and mother for the time being."

The senior subaltern saluted, and walked out.

The colonel turned to the adjutant. "Send Carslake up with that Li-Chow detachment this afternoon. Better see that he is warned for it right away. And—er—keep him busy till the detachment parades."

After the adjutant had gone the colonel wiped his forehead with a silk handkerchief.

"These boys will be the death of me!" he murmured.

Jasmine shared a house with two other girls in a street standing above the main shopping quarter. Except for some half dozen houses, where white women lived, the street was inhabited by Chinese, Japanese, and natives of various races. Only the Japanese kept either their persons or their houses clean, and as the smell of some four different kinds of Oriental cooking was ever present, the odor of the street was not good.

Jasmine's room was scrupulously neat, furnished with simplicity, and decorated with the few personal belongings that she possessed. Her window looked out over Hongkong harbor, and here she liked to sit in the evening watching the pink sunsets and the ships that came and went.

It was about six o'clock when the Chinese house boy brought up the senior subaltern's card. She knew him to be a friend of Tubby's, and said she would see him.

Joe Smith had spent most of the day screwing himself up to the job he had to do. He disliked it intensely, and only real affection for Tubby made him undertake it.

They sat down opposite each other

by the window. He offered her a cigarette, and lit one himself.

"Tubby has gone up the West River to-day," he said; "got sudden orders to take over the guard there. Didn't get a moment to himself before he started; asked me to come up and explain."

Jasmine knew about the Li-Chow guard. Tubby had told her about it. She knew a good deal about the regiment's affairs.

"It wasn't his turn, was it?" she said.

"No; it was young Hunter's, but he has got fever, so Tubby had to go at the last minute."

Jasmine had seen young Hunter that afternoon in his polo clothes going down by rickshaw to Happy Valley. She nodded.

"He will be up there a month," said Joe Smith. "I say, I really came to see you about him this afternoon. He—he had an interview with the colonel this morning."

Jasmine's eyes were fixed on Joe's face. She sat very still.

"He told the colonel that he—he wanted to marry you."

"That is why he has been sent up the West River; I suppose," said Jasmine.

Smith dropped his eyes to the floor.

"Well, he'd have to resign, you know, if——"

Jasmine winced. She knew the remark was true, and that no intentional cruelty lay in it.

"It would be rather serious for Tubby if he left," Joe continued. "I don't know what he'd do. He has not got a bob beyond his pay."

Jasmine nodded again.

"He loves soldiering. I—I think he would miss the regiment awfully."

Jasmine's teeth closed over her lip. This point told more than the other.

"Do you want to marry him?" Joe asked her outright.

Jasmine swept her right arm round the room.

"Well, what do you think? Would I rather live in this filthy street and not get as much liberty as the dirtiest coolie, or marry a decent man and have a house of my own?"

Joe looked exceedingly uncomfortable. He lit another cigarette, and puffed at it till a quarter of an inch of the end glowed bright red. Of course Tubby simply could not be allowed to marry the girl; but all the same, he wished they had sent some one else on this job.

"Er—er—you see, we are awfully fond of Tubby, and so—we thought—er—if it was all the same to you—I mean, I don't see how you could live if Tubby had to leave the army and had no money. We—er—that is, I mean—there is a ticket for Japan going begging, if it is of any use to you while Tubby is away."

Joe rushed the last words of the sentences together, and reached out for his hat.

Jasmine put her toes together and looked at her feet.

For fully a minute she was silent, then she looked up.

"It is nice and cool in Japan, isn't it?"

"Rather!" said Joe. "Heaps better than this stuffy hole."

"Well, if you've got a ticket I'll take it."

"You will?" said Joe eagerly.

"Yes. You could manage a bit of extra cash as well, I suppose, just to get me started up there?"

Jasmine's manner had changed. She spoke coldly; there was a calculating, professional look in her eyes as she turned them on Joe, as though she was trying to sum up what the job was worth.

Joe could not believe the change in her was real. All the regiment had seen her and Tubby about together. It had seemed a real, genuine love affair. A latent business instinct prompted him to put a question to make things certain.

"You don't mind giving up Tubby?" he said.

Jasmine gave a little hard laugh.

"A boy with no money is no use to me," she said. "You say he'll have to leave the army unless we break off?"

"I'm afraid he will," Joe answered.

"Well, give me the ticket, and keep him then!"

Walking back to the mess, Joe reflected on the duplicity of women. The job had been easier than he expected. The minute the girl had learned the true state of affairs she had been ready to drop Tubby like a hot potato. Tubby was well rid of her.

Away up in her room, at the top of the house, Jasmine leaned over the window sill. Her eyes were wide, unseeing, terrible in their emptiness.

A steamer puffed out of Hongkong harbor. Soldiers squatted on the quarter-deck. A figure in khaki stood by the officer on the bridge. The steamer carried the detachment detailed for duty at Li-Chow.

Jasmine took a handkerchief and fluttered it from the widow. Her signal was not noticed by the khaki figure on the bridge. For several minutes she watched the steamer, every now and again waving her handkerchief. Then a bend came in the harbor, and the vessel disappeared. Slowly, as water trickles over the dried bed of a river, Jasmine's eyes filled with tears.



by
O. Henry



Cherchez la Femme

ROBBSINS, reporter for the *Picayune*, and Dumars, of *L'Abeille*—the old French newspaper that has buzzed for nearly a century—were good friends, well proven by years of ups and downs together. They were seated where they had a habit of meeting—in the little, Creole-haunted café of Madame Tibault, in Dumaine Street. If you know the place, you will experience a thrill of pleasure in recalling it to mind. It is small and dark, with six little polished tables, at which you may sit and drink the best coffee in New Orleans, and concoctions of absinth equal to Sazerac's best. Madame Tibault, fat and indulgent, presides at the desk, and takes your money. Nicolette and Mémé, madame's nieces, in charming bib aprons, bring the desirable beverages.

Dumars, with true Creole luxury, was sipping his absinth, with half closed eyes, in a swirl of cigarette

smoke. Robbins was looking over the morning *Pic.*, detecting, as young reporters will, the gross blunders in the make-up, and the envious blue-penciling his own stuff had received. This item, in the advertising columns, caught his eye, and with an exclamation of sudden interest he read it aloud to his friend:

PUBLIC AUCTION.—At three o'clock this afternoon there will be sold to the highest bidder all the common property of the Little Sisters of Samaria, at the home of the Sisterhood, in Bonhomme Street. The sale will dispose of the building, ground, and the complete furnishings of the house and chapel, without reserve.

This notice stirred the two friends to a reminiscent talk concerning an episode in their journalistic career that had occurred about two years before. They recalled the incidents, went over the old theories, and discussed it anew, from the different perspective time had brought.

There were no other customers in the

café. Madame's fine ear had caught the line of their talk, and she came over to their table—for had it not been her lost money—her vanished twenty thousand dollars—that had set the whole matter going?

The three took up the long-abandoned mystery, threshing over the old, dry chaff of it. It was in the chapel of this house of the Little Sisters of Samaria that Robbins and Dumars had stood during that eager, fruitless new search of theirs, and looked upon the gilded statue of the Virgin.

"Thass so, boys," said madame, summing up. "Thass ver' wicked man, M'sieur Morin. Everybody shall be cert' he steal those money I plaze in his hand for keep safe. Yes. He's boun' spend that money, somehow." Madame turned a broad and comprehensive smile upon Dumars. "I ond'stand you, M'sieur Dumars, those day you come ask me fo' tell ev'ything I know 'bout M'sieur Morin. Ah! yes, I know most time when those men lose money you say, '*Cherchez la femme*'—there is somewhere the woman. But not for M'sieur Morin. No, boys. Before he shall die, he is like one saint. You might's well, M'sieur Dumars, go try find those money in those statue of Virgin Mary that M'sieur Morin present at those *p'tite soeurs*, as try find one *femme*."

At Madame Tibault's last words, Robbins started slightly and cast a keen, sidelong glance at Dumars. The Creole sat, unmoved, dreamily watching the spirals of his cigarette smoke.

It was then nine o'clock in the morning, and, a few minutes later, the two friends separated, going different ways to their day's duties. And now follows the brief story of Madame Tibault's vanished thousands:

New Orleans will readily recall to mind the circumstances attendant upon the death of Mr. Gaspard Morin, in that

city. Mr. Morin was an artistic goldsmith and jeweler, in the old French Quarter, and a man held in the highest esteem. He belonged to one of the oldest French families, and was of some distinction as an antiquary and historian. He was a bachelor, about fifty years of age. He lived in quiet comfort, at one of those rare old hostelrys in Royal Street. He was found in his rooms, one morning, dead from unknown causes.

When his affairs came to be looked into, it was found that he was practically insolvent, his stock of goods and personal property barely—but nearly enough to free him from censure—covering his liabilities. Following, came the disclosure that he had been intrusted with the sum of twenty thousand dollars by a former upper servant in the Morin family, one Madame Tibault, which she had received as a legacy from relatives in France.

The most searching scrutiny by friends and the legal authorities failed to reveal the disposition of the money. It had vanished, and left no trace. Some weeks before his death, Mr. Morin had drawn the entire amount, in gold coin, from the bank where it had been placed while he looked about—he told Madame Tibault—for a safe investment. Therefore, Mr. Morin's memory seemed doomed to bear the cloud of dishonesty, while madame was, of course, disconsolate.

Then it was that Robbins and Dumars, representing their respective journals, began one of those pertinacious private investigations which, of late years, the press has adopted as a means to glory and the satisfaction of public curiosity.

"*Cherchez la femme*," said Dumars. "That's the ticket!" agreed Robbins. "All roads lead to the eternal feminine. We will find the woman."

They exhausted the knowledge of the staff of Mr. Morin's hotel, from the

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bell boy down to the proprietor. They gently, but inflexibly, pumped the family of the deceased as far as his cousins twice removed. They artfully sounded the employees of the late jeweler, and dogged his customers for information concerning his habits. Like bloodhounds, they traced every step of the supposed defaulter, as nearly as might be, for years along the limited and monotonous paths he had trodden.

At the end of their labors, Mr. Morin stood, an immaculate man. Not one weakness that might be served up as a criminal tendency, not one deviation from the path of rectitude, not even a hint of a predilection for the opposite sex, was found to be placed to his debit. His life had been as regular and austere as a monk's; his habits, simple and unconcealed. Generous, charitable, and a model in propriety, was the verdict of all who knew him.

"What, now?" asked Robbins, fingering his empty notebook.

"*Cherchez la femme*," said Dumars, lighting a cigarette. "Try Lady Bellairs."

This piece of femininity was the race-track favorite of the season. Being feminine, she was erratic in her gaits, and there were a few heavy losers about town who had believed she could be true. The reporters applied for information.

Mr. Morin? Certainly not. He was never even a spectator at the races. Not that kind of a man. Surprised the gentlemen should ask.

"Shall we throw it up?" suggested Robbins, "and let the puzzle department have a try?"

"*Cherchez la femme*," hummed Dumars, reaching for a match. "Try the Little Sisters of What-d'you-call-'em."

It had developed, during the investigation, that Mr. Morin had held this benevolent order in particular favor. He had contributed liberally toward its support, and had chosen its chapel as

his favorite place of private worship. It was said that he went there daily to make his devotions at the altar. Indeed, toward the last of his life his whole mind seemed to have fixed itself upon religious matters, perhaps to the detriment of his worldly affairs.

Thither went Robbins and Dumars, and were admitted through the narrow doorway in the blank stone wall that frowned upon Bonhomme Street. An old woman was sweeping the chapel. She told them that Sister Félicité, the head of the order, was then at prayer at the altar in the alcove. In a few moments she would emerge. Heavy, black curtains screened the alcove. They waited.

Soon the curtains were disturbed, and Sister Félicité came forth. She was tall, tragic, bony and plain-featured, dressed in the black gown and severe bonnet of the sisterhood.

Robbins, a good rough-and-tumble reporter, but lacking the delicate touch, began to speak.

They represented the press. The lady had, no doubt, heard of the Morin affair. It was necessary, in justice to that gentleman's memory, to probe the mystery of the lost money. It was known that he had come often to this chapel. Any information, now, concerning Mr. Morin's habits, tastes, the friends he had, and so on, would be of value in doing him posthumous justice.

Sister Félicité had heard. Whatever she knew would be willingly told, but it was very little. Monsieur Morin had been a good friend to the order, sometimes contributing as much as a hundred dollars. The sisterhood was an independent one, depending entirely upon private contributions for the means to carry on its charitable work. Mr. Morin had presented the chapel with silver candlesticks and an altar cloth. He came every day to worship in the chapel, sometimes remaining for an hour. He was a devout Catholic, con-

secrated to holiness. Yes, and also in the alcove was a statue of the Virgin that he had, himself, modeled, cast, and presented to the order. Oh, it was cruel to cast a doubt upon so good a man!

Robbins was also profoundly grieved at the imputation. But, until it was found what Mr. Morin had done with Madame Tibault's money, he feared the tongue of slander would not be stilled. Sometimes—in fact, very often—in affairs of the kind there was—er—as the saying goes—er—a lady in the case. In absolute confidence, now—if—perhaps—

Sister Félicité's large eyes regarded him solemnly.

"There was one woman," she said, slowly, "to whom he bowed—to whom he gave his heart."

Robbins fumbled rapturously for his pencil.

"Behold the woman!" said Sister Félicité suddenly in deep tones.

She reached a long arm and swept aside the curtain of the alcove. In there was a shrine, lit to a glow of soft color by the light pouring through a stained-glass window. Within a deep niche in the bare stone wall stood an image of the Virgin Mary, the color of pure gold.

Dumars, a conventional Catholic, succumbed to the dramatic in the act. He knelt for an instant upon the stone flags, and made the sign of the cross. The somewhat abashed Robbins, murmuring an indistinct apology, backed awkwardly away. Sister Félicité drew back the curtain, and the reporters departed.

On the narrow stone sidewalk of Bonhomme Street, Robbins turned to Dumars with unworthy sarcasm.

"Well, what next? Churchy law fem?"

"Absinth," said Dumars.

With the history of the missing money thus partially related, some con-

jecture may be formed of the sudden idea that Madame Tibault's words seemed to have suggested to Robbins' brain.

Was it so wild a surmise—that the religious fanatic had offered up his wealth—or, rather, Madame Tibault's—in the shape of a material symbol of his consuming devotion? Stranger things have been done in the name of worship. Was it not possible that the lost thousands were molded into that lustrous image? That the goldsmith had formed it of the pure and precious metal, and set it there, through some hope of a perhaps disordered brain, to propitiate the saints, and pave the way to his own selfish glory?

That afternoon, at five minutes to three, Robbins entered the chapel door of the Little Sisters of Samaria. He saw, in the dim light, a crowd of perhaps a hundred people gathered to attend the sale. Most of them were members of various religious orders, priests and churchmen, come to purchase the paraphernalia of the chapel, lest they fall into desecrating hands. Others were business men and agents come to bid upon the reality. A clerical-looking brother had volunteered to wield the hammer, bringing to the office of auctioneer the anomaly of choice diction and dignity of manner.

A few of the minor articles were sold, and then two assistants brought forward the image of the Virgin.

Robbins started the bidding at ten dollars. A stout man, in an ecclesiastical garb, went to fifteen. A voice from another part of the crowd raised to twenty. The three bid alternately, raising by bids of five, until the offer was fifty dollars. Then the stout man dropped out, and Robbins, as a sort of *coup de main*, went to a hundred.

"One hundred and fifty," said the other voice.

"Two hundred," bid Robbins, boldly.

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"Two fifty," called his competitor, promptly.

The reporter hesitated for the space of a lightning flash, estimating how much he could borrow from the boys in the office, and screw from the business manager from his next month's salary.

"Three hundred," he offered.

"Three fifty," spoke up the other, in a louder voice—a voice that sent Robbins diving suddenly through the crowd in its direction, to catch Dumars, its owner, ferociously by the collar.

"You unconverted idiot!" hissed Robbins, close to his ear. "Pool!"

"Agreed!" said Dumars, coolly. "I couldn't raise three hundred and fifty dollars with a search warrant, but I can stand half. What you come bidding against me for?"

"I thought I was the only fool in the crowd," explained Robbins.

No one else bidding, the statue was knocked down to the syndicate at their last offer. Dumars remained with the prize, while Robbins hurried forth to wring from the resources and credit of both the price. He soon returned with the money, and the two musketeers loaded their precious package into a carriage and drove with it to Dumars' room, in old Chartres Street, nearby. They lugged it, covered with a cloth, up the stairs, and deposited it on a table. A hundred pounds it weighed, if an ounce, and at that estimate, according to their calculation, if their daring theory were correct, it stood there, worth twenty thousand golden dollars.

Robbins removed the covering, and opened his pocketknife.

"*Sacré!*" muttered Dumars, shuddering. "It is the Mother of Christ. What would you do?"

"Shut up, Judas!" said Robbins, coldly. "It's too late for you to be saved now."

With a firm hand, he chipped a slice from the shoulder of the image. The

cut showed a dull, grayish metal, with a thin coating of gold leaf.

"Lead!" announced Robbins, hurling his knife to the floor. "Gilded!"

"To the devil with it!" said Dumars, forgetting his scruples. "I must have a drink."

Together they walked moodily to the café of Madame Tibault, two squares away.

It seemed that madame's mind had been stirred that day to fresh recollections of the past services of the two young men in her behalf.

"You musn' sit by those table," she interposed, as they were about to drop into their accustomed seats. "Thass so, boys. But, no. I mek you come at this room, like my *très bons amis*. Yes. I goin' mek for you myself one *anisette* and one *café royale* ver' fine. Ah! I lak treat my fren' nize. Yes. Plis come in this way."

Madame led them into the little back room, into which she sometimes invited the especially favored of her customers. In two comfortable armchairs, by a big window that opened upon the courtyard, she placed them, with a low table between. Bustling hospitably about, she began to prepare the promised refreshments.

It was the first time the reporters had been honored with admission to the sacred precincts. The room was in dusky twilight, flecked with gleams of the polished, fine woods and burnished glass and metal that the Creoles love. From the little courtyard a tiny fountain sent in an insinuating sound of trickling waters, to which a banana plant by the window kept time with its tremulous leaves.

Robbins, an investigator by nature, sent a curious glance roving about the room. From some barbaric ancestor, madame had inherited a *penchant* for the crude in decoration.

The walls were adorned with cheap lithographs—florid libels upon nature,

addressed to the taste of the *bourgeois*—birthday cards, garish newspaper supplements and specimens of art advertising calculated to reduce the optic nerve to stunned submission. A patch of something unintelligible in the midst of the more candid display puzzled Robbins, and he rose and took a step nearer, to investigate it at closer range. Then he leaned weakly against the wall, and called out:

"Madame Tibault! Oh, madame! Since when—oh! since when—have you been in the habit of papering your walls with five-thousand-dollar United States four-per-cent gold bonds? Tell me—is this a Grimm's fairy tale, or should I consult an oculist?"

At his words, Madame Tibault and Dumars approached.

"H'what you say?" said madame, cheerily. "H'what you say, M'sieur Robbin'? *Bon?* Ah! those nize li'l' peezees papier! One tam I think those w'at you call calendair, wiz ze li'l' day of mont' below. But, no. Those wall is broke in those plaze, M'sieur Robbin', and I plaze those li'l' peezees papier to conceal ze crack. I did think the couleur harm'nizes so well with the wall papier. Where I get them from? Ah, yes, I remem' ver' well. One day M'sieur Morin, he come at my houze—thass 'bout one mont' before he shall die—thas 'long 'bout tam he promise fo' inv'es' those money fo' me. M'sieur Morin,

he leave thoze li'l' peezees papier in those table, and say ver' much 'bout money thass hard for me to ond'stan. *Mais* I never see those money again. Thass ver' wicked man, M'sieur Morin. H'what you call those peezees papier, M'sieur Robbin'—*bon?*"

Robbins explained.

"There's your twenty thousand dollars, with coupons attached," he said, running his thumb around the edge of the four bonds. "Better get an expert to peel them off for you. Mister Morin was all right. I'm going out to get my ears trimmed."

He dragged Dumars by the arm into the outer room. Madame was screaming for Nicolette and Mémé to come observe the fortune returned to her by M'sieur Morin, that best of men, that saint in glory.

"Marsy," said Robbins, "I'm going on a jamboree. For three days the esteemed *Pic.* will have to get along without my valuable services. I advise you to join me. Now, that green stuff you drink is no good. It stimulates thought. What we want to do is to forget to remember. I'll introduce you to the only lady in this case that is guaranteed to produce the desired results. Her name is Belle of Kentucky, twelve-year-old Bourbon. In quarts. How does the idea strike you?"

"*Allons!*" said Dumars. "*Cherchez la femme.*"



A YOUNG man comes into life asking how best he may place himself. A woman comes into life thinking instinctively how best she may give herself.
—H. G. Wells.



ANY place you love is the world to you. But love is not fashionable any more; the poets have killed it. They wrote so much about it that nobody believed them.—Oscar Wilde.

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IN AINSLEE'S FOR AUGUST

WOMEN, however, he hated; he hated them subconsciously and despised them by instinct . . . Woman was indeed for him the child twelve times unclean of whom the poet speaks. She was the temptress who had beguiled the first man and who continued her work of damnation through the ages. She was the fragile, the dangerous and the mysteriously troubling being. And more than he hated her body of seduction he hated her loving soul . . . Often he had felt the tenderness of women turned toward him . . . and was exasperated at the need of loving which always quivers within them. To his way of thinking, God had created woman only in order to tempt man.

From "Clair de Lune," by Guy de Maupassant.

* * *

HER face softened, grew inexpressibly appealing, and she looked up with her grave smile.

"You think I'm beside myself—raving? I'm not. I never was saner. This thing between us isn't an ordinary thing. If it had been we shouldn't, all these months, have drifted. We should have wanted to skip to the last page—and then throw down the book. We shouldn't have felt we could trust the future as we did. We were in no hurry because we knew we shouldn't get tired; and when two people feel that about each other they must live together—or part. I don't see what else they can do. It's the high seas or else being tied up to Lethe wharf. And I'm for the high seas, my dear."

From "The Long Run," by Edith Wharton.

SOME scoundrel has been worrying you, eh?" said Sir Timothy.

"I've been playing cards with him," said Beatrice. "I owe him a frightful lot of money. He threatens me——"

Sir Timothy's hand grasped his umbrella as though itching to thrash the fellow.

"If I don't pay him the money," said Beatrice, "he swears he'll come to mother for it. Unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless I give him something else instead of money. Do you understand, Uncle Tim? He wants me to go away with him. He'd let me off my debt if——"

Sir Timothy spoke with horror in his voice.

"Great God! I'd kill him like a rat if I once set eyes on him. How much money do you owe the villain?"

"Eighty pounds," said Beatrice with a little gasp.

"Eighty pounds!"

That was a terrible sum for a child to lose at cards. What was society coming to when it could tolerate such things? What was youth thinking, after its heroic spirit in time of war?

From "A Gentleman of the Old School," by Sir Philip Gibbs.

* * *

WHAT are you thinking about, Pussy?"

She evidently did not wish to tell him. She smiled, looked round the room a little fearfully, smiled again and took up her work.

"Pussy?"

"Oh, I don't know; I'm so happy. I'm so glad to have you . . . I wonder if any one was ever so happy."

"Then why do you look so sad?"

"I was thinking it would be so terrible not to be happy. I was trying to imagine what I'd feel like if you didn't care."

"Didn't care!"

"I—I couldn't imagine it," she admitted. He could no longer keep the length of the hearth rug between them when she smiled like that. She continued with his arm round her. "You never let me know the feel of wanting. Just the littlest differences in you would make me eat my heart out. I should never be able to ask you for things. I should just look and look at you, trying to speak, and then you would grow to hate me."

"And then?"

"Don't look at me like that, Martin. And then I should get ill, and if you didn't want me to come back I'd die . . . Silly, I was only imagining. You shouldn't have made me talk."

From *"The Shadowy Third,"* by Elizabeth Bowen.

* * *

THE fact very simply was that Georgiana had by now discovered two things: That she did not love, and never had loved, her husband, and that the duke was in love with her. Now, the duke in love was a different person from Charles in love. Charles in love expected everything and offered nothing. It would have been inconceivable to Charles that he, after marriage, should court his wife. Such a derogation from the marital rights would have opened a wound in his self-esteem which would have bled forever. He would have died of a decline. He would have seen himself despicable, and that would have slain him—a kind of suicide. For to his sort it doesn't matter how many people see the derogation; it is enough that you see it yourself; and to do that one pair of eyes will make

you a looking-glass. But the duke was another kind of lover.

From *"Mrs. Lancelot,"* by Maurice Hewlett.

* * *

OTHER stories in the August AINSLEE's will be by Katherine Mansfield, O. Henry, Henri Murger, Arthur Mills and John Oliver Hobbes. There will be another Book Lovers' Tournament, presenting another anonymous masterpiece from a famous pen.



TOURNAMENT AWARDS

THE anonymous story in the Book Lovers' Tournament of May was written by Honoré de Balzac. He entitled it "La Grande Bretèche." It ranks among the twenty or thirty best-known short stories of world fiction. Translators have given it various titles significant of the story's theme, spirit, or atmosphere. In naming it they have been obliged to exercise their own inventiveness, since the French title cannot be aptly rendered into English. It has been called "The Mysterious Mansion," "The Accursed House," and the like. For the purposes of the Tournament, therefore, any title manifestly in keeping with the story was considered eligible.

The winning contribution in the May Tournament was submitted by Abbie L. Morse of New York City. Miss Morse's letter was less studious and exhaustive than others received, but it attacked its subject with unusual originality, vigor and enthusiasm. It was, in fact, the letter which most effectively compelled the interest of the judges.

Miss Morse's contribution is printed below, followed by extracts from the letters judged next in order of excellence. AINSLEE's check for fifty dollars has been forwarded to the winner. Second-prize checks of five dollars

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each have been awarded the writers of the ten letters next quoted.



THE WINNING LETTER

May 6, 1926.

Editor, AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE:

The title of the mystery story is "La Grande Bretèche," and the name of its author is Honoré de Balzac. I attributed the story to this author because its setting and style reminded me of several Balzac novels that I had read. The exact title I discovered on a card catalogue in the Public Library, verifying it by turning to a collection of short stories in which this story appeared.

"Gee, this fellow certainly can write," would probably be my heartfelt comment. "His stuff is so real! He has got his folks and his scenery down so vividly that I feel as if I were seeing them rather than reading about them. Usually I skip a lot of descriptive passages, but here I don't want to. In fact, I can't, for the description doesn't stick out in chunks. It fits right in with the dialogue and the action. This story is all wool and a yard wide; good to the last—especially the last—drop."

If this is unbecoming phraseology for criticism of one of the world's greatest novelists, I protest that Balzac wrote not of and for the precious and the purist, but of and for the people, publicans, sinners, and ladies of the evening included. If you search you will find embodied in his pages Mr. and Mrs. Briggs and Lulu Belle, Craig's wife and Sergeant Flagg, as well as prototypes of various personages who are to-day the joy of the tabloid newspapers. Why then should we assume that his work be best evaluated by the detached litterateur?

The movie equivalent of this story would show a jealous husband locking his wife's lover into the bathroom and turning on the steam. But such is the genius of Balzac that we see his foreign, eighteenth-century scene more vividly than we remember last week's "comic." Who but a supreme portrayer of life as it is could afford to mention the lady's curl papers in a somber murder story?

What is the quality that makes reader or playgoer sit back in his chair and say: "Gosh! That's great stuff!" Frankly, blankly, I don't know. I can't define it. How many other imarticulates have said of Balzac's "Droll Stories:" "Of course they are terribly hot stuff, but they are so well written"—a comment paralyzing in its feebleness.

Yet perhaps the popular comment, in its

simplicity and brevity, is the only really adequate one and sums up our mystery in four words: "It is great stuff."

ABBIE L. MORSE.

New York City.

* * *

FROM OTHER PRIZE WINNERS

In the present work when Balzac quits the setting for the human scene, how quick that eager fire of his genius for saturating himself in a beloved subject fuses his material to perfect expression! How clear, yet close, the fabric of his narrative grows when he touches human character!

F. CURTIS.

Providence, R. I.

* * *

The story was familiar to me from the days when I used to redeem my tedious high-school chemistry lectures from utter loss by furtive back-row readings from the "Comédie Humaine," the "Contes Drolatiques," and the mass of correspondence to Madame Hanska. Indeed my association of it with the stench and the odors of the laboratory, the lecturer's monotonous drone, but intensified the gusty realism of the tale. The quiet, catlike thread of the narrative, the solemn atmosphere of peril and doom that the author builds up—consider, for example, the electric moment when Madame la comtesse de Merret asks Rosalie to do her hair!—the horror and the stark suspense that hang over it all! All these are elements of a tale that one recalls with the clarity and the emotion of a past experience. It is a tale for cold-sweated readers in the noon of night, readers who fear neither God nor devil; a tale that affects one, in retrospection, as some nightmare that one has safely weathered in the past.

SZYMON ST. DEPTULA.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

* * *

Balzac's portrayal of character is inimitable. I believe, had I not been familiar with this particular story, I should have identified the author by the peculiar quality with which the characters are drawn. I wondered, when I first went to France, why the people seemed so familiar to me, why I grasped their peculiar psychology so readily. Suddenly I realized it was because I had been intimately acquainted with them for years, thanks to Honoré de Balzac.

MABEL JACQUES EICHEL.

New York City.

* * *

What do I think of this story? Although it displeases me in one or two respects, I think that, as an example of dramatic condensation, it is unsurpassed. But, oh, Poe,

why did not you write that tale of horror instead of writing "The Cask of Amontillado?" Then, in my opinion, we should have had perfection indeed.

J. HILLIARD FOLEY.

Ottawa, Canada.

* * *

While "La Grande Bretèche" is complete in itself, it should be read in connection with "Another Study of Woman." The two stories are like a bit of Boccaccio, in that a group of friends gathered about the supper table of Mademoiselle des Touches—whom we suspect is George Sand thinly disguised—discuss women and tell stories to illustrate the feminine temperament. "La Grande Bretèche" forms the climax of the evening.

CARL GLICK.

Missoula, Mon.

* * *

Honoré de Balzac represents the France of his period no less than Poe and O. Henry represent America, and it is, I think, safe to assume that he will continue so to do for many a long day to come.

SINCLAIR HAMILTON.

Toronto, Canada.

* * *

In the realm of pure, speculative thought, Balzac was not great. He was not an idealist, being too much engrossed by materialistic aims; but as an analyst, as a smiling and witty comprehender of human frailties as, in short, an amusing psychological vivisector, the world has never seen his equal.

EDITH M. MARBLE.

Philadelphia, Pa.

* * *

I have been more moved by this tragedy than I would care to confess. Years will not

age it, for in Time it always was, and in Time it always will be, while mankind creeps forward to whatever destiny awaits. The action is brief in words, but age long in the emotions, where every intense moment is a year of days caressed with flame.

J. A. MURPHY.

Magog, Canada.

* * *

Just how important is it that the characters in a story, even though the story itself be otherwise perfect, be something more than mechanical toys? It seems to me that Balzac has strained so earnestly to show us only the naked motives that animate his characters, that we often fail, for lack of one familiar mannerism of our normal world, to recognize them as human beings at all. They act out a good drama, but they do not live. When the show is over, I imagine them cast hastily into some battered truck, falling there in grotesque attitudes, and hurried to a train to make the next town.

JAMES S. POPE.

Atlanta, Ga

* * *

It seems beyond my American idea of the fitness of things for a husband to exact such a cruel punishment and vengeance. I take no pleasure in that type of man and would rather he had been "hoist with his own petard." If the best praise to an actor who takes the part of a villain is hissing, then I praise the husband with all the hisses of a dozen flocks of geese. Who can find any pleasure in such horrible stories? The devil, probably—he can have my share. Yes, it is a literary gem. As a story—construction, analysis, motives, dramatic climax—it is a wonder. I admire it and loathe it.

JAMES O. WALKER.

Burlington, Vt.

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When Fourth of July bands are playing—and the cannon are roaring out their celebration of another day of Independence and Freedom—have a Camel!



Camels represent the utmost in cigarette quality. The choicest of Turkish and Domestic tobaccos are blended into Camels by master blenders and the finest of French cigarette paper is made especially for them. No other cigarette is like Camels. They are the overwhelming choice of experienced smokers.



Our highest wish, if you do not yet know and enjoy Camel quality, is that you may try them. We invite you to compare Camels with any cigarette made at any price.

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company
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RIGHT

"I HAVE BEEN USING Fleischmann's Yeast for six months and it has done wonders for me. I was under treatment for indigestion but nothing seemed able to relieve the intense pain. A friend of mine called my attention to Fleischmann's Yeast. I started to take it and almost immediately I had fewer attacks of indigestion. Now I am enjoying good health. My skin is clear and I feel rested when I wake in the morning."

MILDRED HARRIS,
Springfield, Mass.



BELOW

"MY ENTIRE BODY, on account of chronic constipation, was completely run down. This condition brought about heartburn, dull eyes, a sallow skin blotched with pimples and recurrent boils. On the advice of a specialist, I began to take two Yeast cakes every day. The result: Within five weeks my stomach was restored to normal working order. Today my body is vigorous and healthful."

R. W. HELSER, Philadelphia, Pa.



The Open Door to Health

Their ills corrected—youthful
vitality again—through one food

NOT a "cure-all," not a medicine in any sense—Fleischmann's Yeast is simply a remarkable fresh food.

The millions of tiny active yeast plants in every cake invigorate the whole system. They aid digestion—clear the skin—banish the poisons of constipation. Where cathartics give only temporary relief, yeast strengthens the intestinal muscles and makes them healthy and active. And day by day it releases new stores of energy.

Eat two or three cakes regularly every day before meals: on crackers—in fruit juices, water or milk—or just plain, nibbled from the cake. For constipation especially, dissolve one cake in hot water (not scalding) before breakfast and at bedtime. Buy several cakes at a time—they will keep fresh in a cool dry place for two or three days. All grocers have Fleischmann's Yeast. Start eating it today!

And let us send you a free copy of our latest booklet on Yeast for Health. Health Research Dept. Z-30, The Fleischmann Company, 701 Washington Street, New York.



THIS FAMOUS FOOD tones up the entire system—
aids digestion—clears the skin—banishes constipation.

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60 Days Ago They Called Me "BALDY"

Now my friends are amazed. They all ask me how I was able to grow new hair in such a short time.

BOB MILLER and I had both been getting bald for years. We had tried almost every hair restorer on the market. But we might as well have used brass polish. One day Bob left town—a business trip. Weeks passed. I began to wonder if I'd ever see him again.

One afternoon at the office I heard a familiar voice—"Hello, Baldy," it said. I glanced up, annoyed. There stood Bob.

"For Pete's sake!" I exclaimed, "where have you been keeping yourself?"

We shook hands. "Take off your hat," I suggested sarcastically. "Let me gaze on that 'luxuriant hair' of yours. I haven't seen it for weeks."

"Luxuriant hair is right," he retorted. "I've got the finest growth of hair you ever saw!"

I laughed out loud! "Know any more jokes?" I said.

Bob stepped back and swept off his hat. I couldn't believe my eyes. The top of his head, once almost bare, was covered with a brand new growth of real, honest to goodness hair!

A New Way to Grow Hair

That night I went to Bob's house to try his new hair-growing treatment. He sat me in a chair and placed a strange apparatus on my head and turned on the electricity. The treatment lasted 15 minutes. At the end of the treatment I rubbed the top of my head. "Well, Bob," I chuckled, "I don't feel any new hair."

"Of course you don't," Bob came back. "But just you wait a while."

On my way home I read a booklet which Bob had given me. It described a new method of growing hair—discovered by Alois Merke, founder of the Merke Institute, Fifth Avenue, New York. It was the only treatment I ever heard of that got right down to the roots of the hair and awakened them to new activity. Bob was proof. I decided to send for the treatment immediately.

I Get the Surprise of My Life

Every night I spent 15 minutes taking the treatment. The first two or three days nothing happened. But I could feel my scalp beginning to tingle with new life—new vigor. Then one day when I looked in the mirror I got the thrill of a lifetime. All over my head a fine, downy fuzz was beginning to appear. At the end of a month you could hardly see a bald spot on my head. And after 60 days my worries about baldness were ended. I had gained an entirely new growth of healthy hair.

Here's the Secret

According to Alois Merke, in most cases of loss of hair the hair roots are not dead, but merely dormant—temporarily asleep. To make a sickly tree



grow you would not rub "growing fluid" on the leaves. You must nourish the roots. And it's exactly the same with the hair.

This new treatment, which Merke perfected after 17 years' experience in treating baldness, is the first and only practical method of getting right down to the hair roots and nourishing them.

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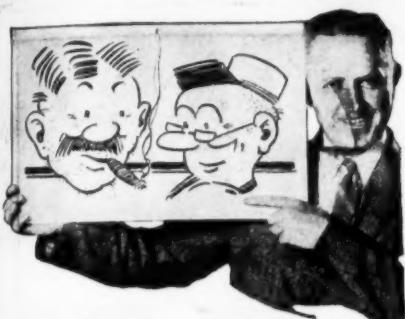
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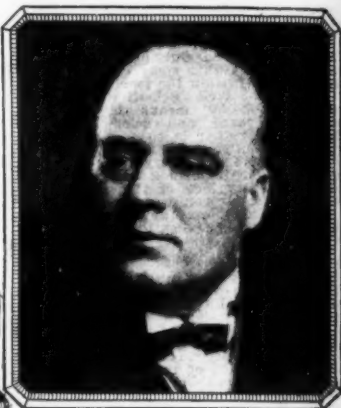


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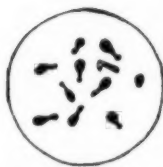


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DANDRUFF?



Bottle Bacilli, the cause of Dandruff. Illustration Reproduced from Hazen's "Diseases of the Skin." C. V. Mosby, Publisher.

Dandruff is a disease difficult to cure, but easy to check. Read below about the best way to combat it.

It's a danger signal!

DANDRUFF is a danger signal. If you have it you should do something about it.

Perhaps you never knew it before, but dandruff is a germ disease. It spreads by infection from personal contact, as with the common use of combs and brushes. Children, for instance, are never troubled with dandruff until actually infected by some contact.

Dandruff is a disease difficult to cure but easy to check. It has a tendency to reappear, unless properly treated and often brings with it the possible loss of hair or actual baldness.

The ideal treatment to combat dandruff conditions is the systematic use of Listerine, the safe antiseptic.

We have received hundreds of unsolicited letters from Listerine users, who are most enthusiastic in their

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Moreover, Listerine will not discolor the hair nor will it stain fabrics.

Not only men but women have become devoted users of Listerine for this purpose — women, particularly, since bobbed hair has been in vogue and has made them more conscious of dandruff if it happened to be present.

Try Listerine this way. Used systematically, the results are almost miraculous! — *Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis, U. S. A.*

LISTERINE

—and dandruff simply do not get along together